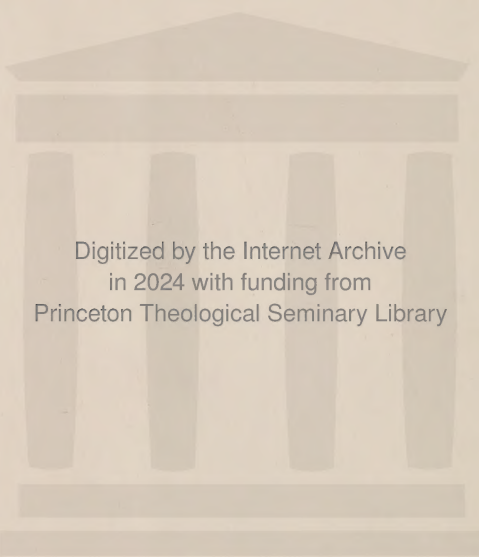


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Lives of the English saints

1844



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S. Edmund

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LIVES

OF

THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

S. Edmund,

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MANSUETI HEREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON:

JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

1845.

LONDON :
Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

PREFACE.

THE sources for the Life of S. Edmund, though not copious, are of peculiar value and authority, having been written by persons intimately acquainted with him, and that within six years after his death.

i. B. A Life written by Bertrand, one of the archbishop's attendant clerks, and faithfully attached to him. He was spoken of by Archbishop Albert as "*discipulus quem diligebat pater Edmundus, et secretorum ejus conscius.*" After the archbishop's death, he entered the Cistercian order at Pontigny, of which he became prior in 1249. The most complete copy of this Life is that printed, from a copy taken of the original once at Pontigny, in Martene and Durand, *Thesaurus Anecdotorum*, vol. iii. Besides the writer's own means of information, it contains all the particulars furnished by the testimonials which were sent in during the inquiry preceding the canonization. The writer speaks of himself as relating "the things which he had heard and seen." This Life with considerable variation of language, and with some slight additional facts, is found in three Cotton MSS. Cleop. B. i. Faust. B. i. Jul. D. vi. in a Lambeth MS. (No. 135) in Surius (Nov. 16,) in Vincent of Beauvais, (*Speculum Histor.*) in John of Tinmouth, (MS. in Lambeth Library,) and in a Bodleian MS. (Fell 3.)

ii. Jul. D. vi. (2.) This Cotton MS. contains another, and distinct Life, which, though containing particulars borrowed from the former, furnishes many that are new and peculiar to itself.

iii. Chron. Lanercost. A short account inserted in this Chronicle, and evidently written by an eyewitness, gives a few particulars not elsewhere found.

iv. Alb. Hist. Can. Albert, Archbishop of Armagh, and afterwards Archbishop of Livonia and Prussia, wrote at the request of the monks of Pontigny, a complete history of the Canonization and Translation of the Saint. Printed in Martene and Durand.

v. In the same place may be found (no doubt copied from the Pontigny volume) the testimonies which were sent in to the Holy See in order to the canonization, the bulls of Innocent iv, &c. More testimonies are given in the Appendix to Hearne's edition of Fordun, and others are in MS. in C.C.C. Library, Oxford.

vi. The miracles, from the Catalogue kept at Pontigny, are also in Martene and Durand. They omit the particulars of all but those that were proved at the canonization. The Fell MS. however supplies this defect, though the later leaves are wanting.

Dr. Gascoygne, in his 'Dictionarium Theologicum,' (MS. in Lincoln Coll. Library, pt. 2. p. 94,) speaks of a Life written by Albert, archbishop of Livonia. His words are, 'Hoc magister Albertus Livoniæ et Prusciæ Archiepiscopus et apostolicæ sedis legatus, in vita quam scripsit de S. Edmundo archiepiscopo quondam Cantuariensi. Qui S. Edmundus fuit magister artium Oxoniæ, et doctor sacræ theologiæ Parisiis, ut patet in libro vitæ ipsius S. Edmundi.' It might be supposed that he meant the history of the canonization by this Albertus, but that the words he quotes do not occur in that. Nothing else is known of this Life, nor of that which Leland and others attribute to Robert Rich, the brother of S. Edmund. There does not seem any foundation for the assertion of A. Butler that this Robert is the author of the Life Jul.

THE LIFE OF
S. Edmund.

CHAPTER I.

EDMUND IN THE SCHOOLS.

THE little town of Abingdon, in Berkshire, was chiefly remarkable in former times for one of the largest and most substantial Benedictine Abbeys in the kingdom, and for the remains of a Saxon palace which had been the occasional residence of the Kings of Wessex or Mercia. It is situated in a rich and level plain at the junction of the Ock with the Thames, and in those days was just on the skirts of an extensive forest of native oak, which had covered, ever since the days of the Romans, the six miles of hilly ground which separated it from Oxford. Thus the two great Abbeys of Abingdon and Osney stood like two beacon towers at either extremity of the gloomy, tangled, and in parts swampy forest, of which the traveller who now ascends the valley of the Thames to Oxford yet perceives a scanty relic, under the name of Bagley Wood.

In this town, towards the close of the twelfth century, was born the last of the great English Saints, Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury 1234-1240. He

was not indeed the last who in England has lived a saintly life, nor even the last who has been inscribed in the canon of the blessed ; but he was the last the fame of whose holiness filled Christendom, or even extended at all beyond the limits of his native country. Oh that it might please God to restore, in this our day and generation, the race which has so long failed among us !

He is known among writers of hagiology as Edmund of Pontigny, but the surname of his family was Rich ; the epithet, " The Rich," having become applicable to his ancestors as a distinction among their fellow-townsmen. He, however, signed himself always Edmund of Abingdon,¹ and is accordingly so called by the historians, following the ordinary custom of ecclesiastics of denoting themselves from the place of their birth. His whole family was one devout beyond the ordinary measure, and dedicated to God's service. His father, Edward,² some time before his death, with the consent of his wife, taking his leave of the world, retired to the neighbouring Abbey of Ensham.³ This holy practice was quite common in those days. Not only disappointment or failure in the world, sickness, or other special warning coming home to the soul, drew men to the religious life, but after a certain age, after having toiled in their vocation, and having discharged the duties of active life, after the burden and heat of the day, they longed for repose, for time to prepare and dress the soul for her last journey. Instead of getting enamoured of life, and clinging more closely to it as it ebbs, trembling before the gradual

¹ See a charter in Dugdale, M. A. vol. i. 960 ; and also Dodsworth's Hist. of Salisbury, p. 117.

² According to others, Reynald.

³ Evesham, ap. M. and D.

inroads upon its vigour, the heavenly soul longingly anticipates the period of decline as one of peace, when temptation will be weaker. Like Isaac, it retires in the evening to meditate in the field. Thus, the monasteries were not only seminaries of Christian virtue for the young and enthusiastic who burned to devote their whole lives to God, but a refuge and shelter for the aged, who had learned from experience the vanity of life,—a state of recollection intermediate between this world and the next.

Of Edmund's three brothers, one followed his father into the monastery of Ensham; another, Nicholas, entered that of Boxley, in Kent;⁴ and the third, Robert, was the constant companion of the Saint. Two sisters, as we shall see, afterwards became nuns. But the mother, to whom God vouchsafed this holy progeny, was herself a Saint, and worthy to be the mother of a Saint. Though, for the sake of her children, Mabel continued to live in the world, her life was one of religious austerity, serving God with fastings and prayers night and day. She attended almost always at the midnight hours in the neighbouring abbey. Above all, bearing in mind what Scripture says, that "She which liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," she had imposed upon herself the perpetual wearing of sack-cloth next her skin. And to ensure that its rough surface should be always in contact with her body, she laced over it a belt, or stays of iron, which kept it tight around her. Using thus material weapons in this her spiritual combat, in which she was at once victor and vanquished. How many thousands of women put their bodies to as great torment for the sake of a slim waist

⁴ Cotton MS. Jul. D. vi. (2.)

or an elegant appearance during a few years of their youth ! This is no fable, for to those of Mabel's own age, more familiar than we with such mortifications, it appeared wonderful. And in memory thereof, the instrument itself, taken from her body at death, was carefully preserved, and gilt over, and so handed down for three hundred years in the family of a citizen of Oxford, by name Dagvyle. He left his property to Lincoln College in that University, and this relic was specially bequeathed to the Church of All Saints, under the name of "The Long Pendant Gyrdle," to be attached to a statue of S. Edmund in that church, so late as the reign of Henry the Seventh. And in such reverence was Mabel's memory held that they esteemed themselves fortunate who could procure a portion of her clothes ; and the chapel adjoining the abbey in which she was buried, though in fact dedicated to the Holy Cross, always went by the name of the Chapel of S. Edmund's mother.⁵

A phenomenon attending his birth was remembered and looked on as an omen of the future purity of the Saint. The new-born infant came forth from the womb without stain or spot, those outward emblems of the inward defilement of original sin with which all the children of Adam are brought into the world. The child lay from the morning till the evening of the day on which its birth took place without motion or sign of life. The midwives thought it dead, and would have had it buried, but the mother resisted this. At her entreaty the babe was baptized, and life and respiration insensibly appeared.

Many illustrious men have told us that their eminence was due entirely to the fostering hand of a

⁵ A. Wood, *Hist. and Antiq.* ii. 9, from the City Records.

mother. There is perhaps no contact between minds so close, no power of moulding so great as that possessed by a mother over the infant years of her son. A mighty influence for good or for evil. How is this most precious of the privileges of maternity abused when it is used to kindle ambition, and to point the energies of the boy to success in life as his end! And if the man who, after years of toil, has climbed the steeps of fame or power, can look back with gratitude and fondness to her who gave the first impulse, who encouraged his childish aspirations to become "a great man," setting before his eager imagination, in all their glowing colours, the examples of the world's heroes, what tenderness and love may we not suppose the matured Saint to feel towards a mother who, instead of thus employing her power in aid of the world, the flesh, and the devil—too powerful tempters of themselves—cherished in him only the spirit of self-denial and self-conquest, who first set before him the humility of his Saviour, the austerity of the Saints, the constancy of martyrs!

Thus she inured him betimes to abstinence. What increases the difficulty and danger to the constitution of the discipline of fasting is to have been used in youth to a full and rich diet. On the other hand, those who begin the practice early have no such additional obstacle to encounter, and will without effort sustain an abstinence that costs another much. This may partly help us to understand the accounts we read quite commonly of the wonderful fasts of religious men of old. The good Mabel accordingly taught him, as soon as ever he was capable of understanding the meaning of the act, to fast every Friday on bread and water. She did this not severely by compulsion, but gently, giving him little toys to induce him to do it of his own accord.

It has often happened to pious mothers that their care and anxiety has been after all, or seemed to be, in vain, and the world has come in and carried off the child they had devoted to God. In such case they have, notwithstanding, their reward. But it was not so with the young Edmund. In him was fulfilled the promise : "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." His mother declared before her death that she had never had cause to reprove anything that he did. As he grew up to years of discretion, he followed by free choice the way in which he had been led as a child. His study was only how to make sacrifices well-pleasing to God. He shunned the sports and amusements competent to his years, and frequented rather the churches. He would dedicate to God not a part only of his life, but the whole of it, its best part, the bud and promise of his youth. How hard does not this seem to most, even of the innocent and well-disposed young. There are those who have gained the mastery over passion, and who have not sold themselves as slaves to that hard task-master, ambition, in whom generous enthusiasm still lives unclouded by vice, and uneradicated by selfish aims. Yet even these—and there are not many such—though they are of the very highest order of the natural man, are very far from that spirit of entire surrender which, with the whole strength of the youthful will, dedicates every thought, word, and action, every future moment of its existence, to God. They have escaped shipwreck at the very outset of their course, from the more obvious perils of sin ; but life is so fresh and joyous ; liberty of action and motion is so dear ; the cup of youth though pure is so bright and sparkling, nay, the more delicious because it is felt to

be innocent, that we are tempted to think it a thankless rejection of God's best gifts to throw all this away ; and bury ourselves in the gloomy walls of a monastery, or tie ourselves down to a cheerless and monotonous life of prayer and devotion. Such a life is at once felt to be congenial to those that are broken by sickness, or bowed by sorrow, disappointment, or loss of friends. But it seems a contradiction of nature when health, youth, and vigour, waste themselves upon it. Some Saints have felt this struggle within them, and have gained the victory. It is a temptation which only the virtuous and high-minded can experience. But there are others who seem raised even above this, who with the same ardour and impulse, with all the energy of young life, burn to devote to an ascetic career all these faculties with the same enthusiasm that others do to essay them in the open world. It is hard for us even to conceive the exalted virtue of such souls, who thus anticipate the usual result of a long and painful noviciate. They seem as though they could dispense with the cloister, and are at once what the rule only aims at producing.

It was thus with young Edmund. His only solicitude was that no precious time should be lost, but that every thought and act might tend towards his one end, that of glorifying God in all his powers. When about twelve years old, his mother sent him and his brother to the schools in Oxford. And here his chief desire was to preserve his body in purity, spotless, and inviolate. He sought spiritual counsel in this matter from a certain Priest, famed for his wisdom and discretion, to whom his mother had given him in charge. Under his guidance he resolved to make a private vow of perpetual continence before God, and the ever Virgin

Mother. Entering a church, accordingly, he knelt before an image of Our Lady, and earnestly prayed for succour and strength to keep his vow. Following the suggestion of boyish fancy, he ratified his vow by a little ceremony. Having two rings made with the words of the Angel, Ave Maria, &c., upon them, one of which placing on the finger of the Image, the other on his own, he thus espoused himself to the Blessed Virgin. This youthful action he kept from the knowledge of all ; though within himself he never ceased to keep up the remembrance of it. But near the end of his life, when he had ceased to fear the demon that lurketh in the noon-day, he related it to his friends, and requested that it might be written down for the benefit of others. In attestation of it the very ring with the inscription was noted on his finger at his burial ; and the image was pointed out as an object of curiosity in the University.⁶ His biographers mention instances in which his resolution was put to trial ; when the grace of God, and the aid of the Blessed Virgin, saved him ; and it was confidently attested by those who knew him all his life, and by all his confessors, that he preserved purity of body inviolate till the day of his death.

His progress in study seemed, at one time, likely to be put a stop to by a severe pain in the head, which never left him. His mother, who no doubt remembered how marvellously he had seemed to come to life only on his baptism, suggested that he should now submit to the clerical tonsure. He followed this advice, and suffered himself to be shorn as a clerk. The pain immediately left him, as though it had been extracted

⁶ *Gloriosæ Virginis imaginem quam sepe et una cum tota Universitate vidimus. Chron. Lanercost.*

from his head by a forceps, as he afterwards expressed it to a friend, and never afterwards returned.

Anxious to give her sons the best education that was to be had, Mabel sent Edmund and his brother Robert, while yet young, to Paris. At Oxford they had been close to their home, and she must have had the consolation of seeing them often, but now she was sending them out from home, to part from them perhaps for ever, for a student then did not go backwards and forwards between the university and his own home, but took up his abode altogether in the former for the whole period during which he was to attend the disputations and lectures. She gave them but a scanty purse,⁷ commending them to God, "to whom she trusted to provide, and that bountifully for them." This alluded to the way in which scholars were supported. Coming from the poorer classes, their own families could do little for them, but they received alms, and it was considered a special charity to contribute to the maintenance of the poor scholar. This was the origin of fellowships and exhibitions, which were but more permanent charitable benefactions of the same kind, and were only intended, by those who founded them, for such as could not support themselves during their period of study, which might last from ten to fifteen years. It was only gradually that the practice was introduced of holding them for an unlimited time.⁸ Thus, it makes a part of the scholar's portrait in Chaucer, that he was supported by alms :—

But all be that he was a philosopre
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,

⁷ Quendam pecuniæ summam modico duraturam tempore, B.

⁸ Hüber on Univ. i. 177.

But all that he might of his frendes hente
On bokes and on lerning he it spente,
And besily gan for the soules praie
Of them that gave him wherewith to scolaie.⁹

Much more anxious than to provide even for their necessary bodily wants, was she to guard their souls against the dangers to which they would be more especially exposed in Paris.¹ She gave them each a sackcloth shirt, enjoining them to wear it next their skin twice or thrice in the week ; this practice would be at once a penance for past sin, a discipline of virtue and fortification against temptation, and a memento that could not be got rid of, that the joys of life and the indulgence of the flesh were not for them ; and such was her persuasion, from her own experience, of the benefits of the practice, that in sending her saintly son, from time to time, fresh supplies of linen, she never omitted to include a hair shirt among them.²

While yet at Paris, he was summoned home to witness the holy death of his mother, and to receive a last charge at her hands. She had given him her blessing with the utmost tenderness,³ when he reminded her of his brothers who were absent. "Have I not blessed you, my son?" she asked ; "in that blessing be assured that all your brothers are partakers." For she had a sure presentiment of the eminence of sanctity to which this son would hereafter attain. This was

⁹ And so late as in Luther's time, in Germany poor scholars went from door to door crying ' panem propter Deum.'—Luther's Letters.

¹ Vid. Stephen Langton, p. 4.

² The old writers of chivalrous romance are fond of this trait of the great Sir Percival, that he would never abandon the good hempen shirt his mother made for him. *Mores' Cath.* i. 28.

³ *Affectuosissime edita.*

grounded not only on observation of his pure and gentle behaviour, but on a dream, in which she had seen him with a crown of thorns on his head, from which bright flowers shot up into the sky. So she had ever distinguished him by her love above the rest of her children, and she now gave them her blessing through him, and committed to him especially his two sisters, Margaret and Alice, whom she desired, as soon as opportunity might offer, that he would enter in some monastery.

There was a practice common at the time, for convents to receive money with the novices when they entered. It was a bad practice, and had been over and over again prohibited by the Councils. But yet it seemed so fair that everyone should contribute something to the support of the house in which they were to be maintained, that it continued, though disapproved. In compliance with this practice, Mabel had apportioned a sum to go with her daughters. But Edmund would by no means consent to this. Under whatever guise,—as, for example, when it was said to be taken to provide the dress of the new-comer,⁴—he considered it simoniacal. The legal and canonical definitions of simony might be evaded, it is true, but the thing remained the same. But none of the abbeys to which he applied would admit on these terms. It was so easy to mistake his motive. It might be penuriousness, and his family was known not to be poor. Or, if they did not suspect him of avarice, they might think it a very unnecessary scruple on his part. It was a fancy peculiar to himself. The canons were equally known to others, who did not, however, press

⁴ *Prætextu vestimentorum ultra justum pretium.* *Constit. Steph. Langton, c. 35.*

them thus literally, or think that they forbade a free gift being offered to the house by the novice. There was the common practice of the time on one hand, and the private opinion (it seemed nothing more) of a young clerk of the university on the other. So all the abbesses refused him. But Edmund would not yield or give up his search in despair. And he succeeded unexpectedly. As he entered the Benedictine nunnery of Catesby, between Banbury and Daventry, in Northamptonshire, before he had uttered a word respecting his business, the Prioress saluted him by name, and, saying she knew the purpose for which he was come, prayed that he would, without delay, send his sisters to her. This Prioress shared the spirit of S. Theresa, who writes to Father Dominic Bagnez, "Be assured, father, that it is an occasion of the greatest joy to me, whenever I receive sisters who bring nothing with them to the convent, whom I receive for the love of God; I wish I might receive them all in this manner." Thus this seemed the asylum provided for them by God's providence; a humble house, but that was what S. Edmund sought; not as "many, who preferred those religious houses which are richly founded and seem to hold a rank in the world, a thing very absurd in persons who renounce the world and profess a state of abjection and poverty."⁵ Here they, therefore, embraced the religious life, and became successively prioresses, living endued with saintly virtues, which, after death, were evidenced by miracles.⁶

⁵ Alban Butler.

⁶ Matt. Par. The nuns of Catesby continued to maintain to the last an edifying holiness. The visitors at the dissolution are not very good evidence on such a subject, but they say, "The house of Catesby we founde in verry perfett order, the priores a sure, wyse, discrete,

Edmund did not follow their example, feeling perhaps that his vocation lay in the schools. Yet he was a frequent guest in monasteries, yet living, when he was so, not as a guest, but as one of the brotherhood. He spent a twelvemonth or more at this time in the Priory of Merton, in Surrey. And long afterwards he returned here again, "going in and out among them as though he were one of the Sons of that Church."⁷ The Cistercians became attached to him, and little opportunity as their rule allowed them for talking, they delighted in his conversation and admired his devotion.⁸

After he had passed the competent time in the study of arts, he became a master himself, that is, he opened a school and taught. We cannot determine how much of his time thus occupied was spent at Paris and at Oxford respectively, but it was divided between the two places. So far from allowing this new duty to interfere with the devotions he had hitherto used, it only impelled him to add to them. Accordingly, though it was not usual for the teachers in arts, who were not yet in holy orders or beneficed, so to do, he made it a rule to hear mass and to say the canonical hours every day

and very relygious woman, with ix nunnys under her obedyence, as relygious and devout, and wyth as good obedyence, as we have tyme paste seen, or belyke shall see. The seid house standyth in such a quarter, much to the releff of the kyng's people, and his grace's pore subjects, their likewyse mo relieved as by the reporte of divers worshyppfull nere thereunto adjoyning as of all other yt ys to us openly declared; wherefore yf yt shuld please the kyng's highnesse to have eny remorse that eny such relygous house shall stande, we thynk his grace cannot appoynt eny house more mete to shew hys most gracious charitie and pitey over than one the said house of Catesby." —ap. Dugdale, M.A. iv. 638.

⁷ Jul. D. vi. (2.)

⁸ Quidam fratrum in ipsius valde delectabantur colloquiis. Id.

before he commenced his lectures. For the better facility of so doing, he built in the parish in which he happened to lodge a small chapel, which he frequented for this purpose. The means of doing this were provided for him by his patrimonial estate, which had come into his sole hands. But he seems to have soon disburthened himself of this, for we find him making over his tenements in the town of Abingdon to the Hospital of S. John, outside the east gate of Oxford.⁹ To this practice of saying the canonical hours he brought many of the students by the influence of his example.

And as he did not suffer study to encroach upon devotion, so neither did he find it incompatible with the performance of works of mercy of the most laborious and harassing kind. An instance of this is furnished by his behaviour to a sick pupil. Hearing that he was poor and in want, he had him brought to his own lodgings, and for five weeks that he kept his bed the saint lay on a couch by his side, attending him night and day, not content merely to provide for him what he stood in need of, but rendering him with his own hands the most menial offices. And every morning after a night of this labour and fatigue, he went forth as usual to the disputation.

Indeed, he seemed hardly at any time to allow himself the repose of entire sleep. For though he had in his chamber a bed furnished in the usual manner,¹ yet he did not sleep in it, but lay on a bench at the foot of it, or else on the ground. But ascetic habits, like self-indulgent ones, grow upon a man. And in time he

⁹ A. Wood. Hist. Antiq. ii. p. 9.

¹ Satis honeste stratum.—B.

began to find the recumbent posture too great a luxury. So he would take his rest at night, sitting upright wrapt in his scapular, or at most in a cloak. And this practice, those who were intimate with him believed,—for so secret did he keep his austerities, that it could not be ascertained with certainty—that he had observed for the last thirty years or upwards of his life. This, coupled with the most vigorous abstinence, made his friends fear for his head. They thought human strength could not support so much, and that he would either die under the discipline or lose his senses.²

He rose at midnight to matins, which he attended, when in Paris, at the church of S. Mery. He never returned to his couch, even such as it was, after he had once risen, but spent the time which remained till daylight in prayer, weeping and groaning before the altar of the blessed Virgin in the same church, and then betook himself to the schools with the rest. In short, he could never be said to sleep; but if nature was sometimes overcome during his long vigils, he would lean his head against the wall and obtain a few moments of repose as he sat or knelt. Thus was always applicable to his rest, what one once said of himself when asked if he was sleeping, ‘Non dormio sed succumbo.’

Thus he passed six years in teaching in arts. He was probably still young, for it was usual for mere boys to graduate in arts,³ when he was called to the study of theology, by a vision which has become, perhaps, the most well-known incident in his life. He

² Credebant quod capitis esset incursum insaniam.—B.

³ About this time Cardinal Robert, Legate in France, in his regulations for the university, forbade any one from reading in arts before twelve years of age. Bulæus, iii. 81.

was engaged in a course of mathematics, and dreamed that his mother appeared, and asked, pointing to the diagrams which lay before him, "Son, what figures be these thou art so intent on? Henceforth, quit them, and give thyself to such as these," drawing in his right hand three circles, which she marked with the names of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. For as, even in the most devout, the intellect needs previous training before it can venture on theology as a science, so there is always danger lest it should rest on subjects that are but preliminary, and mistake for the support and occupation of the intellect that which a wise Christian education assigned only for its discipline. From this danger Edmund was preserved by the interference of her who had guided him all along. Whatever was the nature of the vision, he felt it a divine call, and, from this time, applied himself to the study of theology exclusively. Such was his ardour, that the days seemed to him too few and too short, and he continued in study almost the whole night through. Yet it was not that intellectual ardour of which the end is, after all, but self, but that love of divine knowledge which leads to the abnegation of self. Of this he gave a notable instance. For at this very time, when he seemed to have most need of them, he did not hesitate to part with his books, that he might have wherewith to relieve some scholars who were in want. His whole library was, indeed, but the Old Testament with the Gloss and the Decretals. For when the Archbishop of York, who had heard of his application to theology, and probably of his want of books, had offered to have a Bible written out for his use, he refused, fearing that some monastery would have to be burdened with the expense and the labour of

transcription. Yet this was not from setting little value on his books. For once, on a journey between Paris and England, he had committed his Bible to the charge of one of his companions, who lost it. On learning the loss he had thus sustained through carelessness, Edmund was moved even to anger. This, he used to say, was the sole occasion in his whole life on which he was overcome by that passion.⁴

After some years spent in the study of theology, he proceeded to the degree of doctor, at the entreaty of his friends. And this degree then implied actual teaching, as the title by which it is still denoted in universities implies, S.T.P., Professor of Sacred Theology. And S. Edmund's teaching was such as sought the spiritual edification of his hearers, and not their intellectual advantage only. Many instances are related of its effects on the better disposed. Men of great station, who would sometimes come to hear him lecture, were so affected by his words, that they would shut up their note-books, being affected even to tears. Some possessed of rich benefices resigned them, and entered into religion, for the purpose of pursuing after that wisdom of which his words had given them, as it were, a glimpse, "preferring her before sceptres and thrones, and esteeming riches nothing in comparison of her."⁵ One night he saw in a dream a large fire kindled in his schools, out of which were drawn seven burning torches. The vision had its fulfilment on the morrow. While he was lecturing, Stephen of Lexinton, an Abbot of the Cistercian Order, entered his schools, and, at the conclusion of

⁴ Tunc semel, nec amplius toto tempore vitæ suæ. B.

⁵ Wisd. of Sol. vii. 8.

the lecture, seven of his scholars followed the Abbot into his monastery at Quar, in the Isle of Wight. "The fire of the Divine word which the Holy Spirit poured among them through the mouth of the lecturer, mightily inflamed their hearts to the love of poverty and forgetfulness of the world." One of these seven, by name Stephen, afterwards became Abbot of Clairvaux.

His countenance was significant of the heavenly wisdom with which he was gifted, being noted for a subtle and joyous grace, and even a beauty peculiar to itself.⁶ It was as though the splendour of divine love, which had prepared for itself an abode in his breast, made the casket which contained it transparent, giving light to those around. Another vision which he had shewed from what source he sought this illumination. One day he had mounted the chair from which he was to hold his disputation, and was revolving the subject in his mind before commencing. The question for the day was on the Trinity. While he awaited the arrival of the rest of his pupils, he was overtaken by sleep for a moment; during which he saw, in a dream, the Holy Spirit, in the shape of a dove, fly towards him and place in his mouth of the blessed body of Christ. On rousing himself, he disputed on the Blessed Trinity with such surprising subtlety, depth, and fervour, as almost to exceed the power of the human intellect, so that it seemed to his hearers they heard an angel, rather than a man, so did he open to them the depths of that unfathomable mystery.

Nor was he less powerful in his discourses "ad popu-

⁶ *Præ cæteris disputantium colorata.*

lum," than in the schools.⁷ He had an eloquence in his preaching which wrought even on the minds of the coldest. It was usual with him in preaching to hold in his hand a crucifix, on which he would look from time to time, now with tears, now with smiles. When asked the reason of this diversity, he said, he wept to think that among so many hearers there should be so few doers of the word ; but that he smiled again when he recollected the benefits which that Cross had brought to the world. An instance of the effects of his preaching is on record in the case of a distinguished person. This was William Earl of Salisbury, the half-brother of the late king (John). He had led the usual life of a baron, and had his share in the civil wars and commotions of that reign. And he looked on religion and its ordinances with the same contempt as the rest of the knights who were about that prince. Of course he never confessed, or approached the holy altar. His last expedition had been into Gascony in the service of the young king Henry. On his return he was overtaken by a tempest in the Bay of Biscay. After many days and nights tossing to and fro, the earl, and all who were in the ship, despairing of their lives, threw all the treasure and jewels into the sea, that as he came naked into this world, so he might pass out of it despoiled of all earthly ornament. In this his utmost despair, a waxen light of great size, and shining with great splendour, was seen by all in the ship, on the summit of the mast, and near it a woman of exquisite beauty, protecting that bright light from the fury of the wind and rain.⁸ This deliverance

⁷ Assiduis prædicationibus quibus plurimum vacabat, plures ad Dominum attrahebat. Trivet. Annal.

⁸ Matt. Par.

no doubt had an effect on him. And after his return to Salisbury he was persuaded by Ella, his countess, to listen to Edmund. At his first interview the mere sight of the holy man's face softened his brute's nature.⁹ Turning to Ella, he said, "I believe verily that this is a man of God." He confessed in Edmund's presence to a hermit, and afterwards received with fitting devotion the Body of Christ. Nor was this a temporary reformation. He died shortly after this in great penitence. Being on his deathbed, in his Castle of Salisbury, he caused the bishop, Richard Poor, to come to him, that he might minister to him in confession and the last rites. When the bishop entered his chamber, bearing the Body of Christ, the earl was lying on his bed in a high fever; indeed it was thought he had been poisoned. But he exerted all his remaining strength to throw himself from his bed; and tying a cord round his neck, in token of humility, prostrated himself weeping upon the floor, and crying out that he was a traitor to the Most High; nor would he be raised up till he had made his confession and received the Holy Sacrament. And so having for some days persevered in acts of penitence, he yielded up his soul to his Redeemer.¹

At another time a certain prostitute proposed to her companions, for sport, "to go and hear this canting fellow, and see what he is like."² She went, and was converted from her wicked life by his words.

All this intellectual labour in teaching and preaching was supported, not so much by the body, and by bodily refreshments, as by the soul energizing almost without the.

⁹ Ad ejus aspectum bestialis ejus animus humanior est effectus.

¹ Matt. Par.

² Eamus ad papalardum illum et cum cominus videamus.

body. The streams of instruction that flowed from his mouth were fed not by the hard intellectual labour of a few hours, but by the perpetual meditation of the Divine nature in which his whole soul was occupied. It has been said³ that invention in science, or success in business, are only attainable at the price of "ever thinking of it." But the most ardent in the pursuit of science or gain cannot be so unceasingly occupied with their subject as the Saint with his. For all the varied acts of which a religious life consists, though they seem diverse and distinct, yet are but so many expressions of the one thought ever present,—one, yet infinite. Thus, whether studying, teaching, preaching, meditating, or praying, Edmund's mind circled around God, and his only meat seemed to be to do the will of Him that sent him. Sleep he seemed to regard as an enemy that would be ever robbing him of some moments of spiritual joy. Nor was his abstinence less beyond the ordinary measure of man. He seemed to regard abstinence as a virtue which, like chastity, would be marred by one single deviation, and so he had kept it himself from his childhood unspotted. None who shared his meals could ever recollect that he had eaten such an amount as is ordinarily sufficient to satisfy appetite.⁴ The moral virtue of temperance both in food and drink is requisite, under ordinary circumstances, for high achievements in the world. This when exalted to the saintly degree becomes abstinence, and seems, if we may judge from the lives of all the Saints, to be an equally

³ By Newton.

⁴ *Nunquam potuerunt perpendere eum ad communem hominum satietatem comedisse.* B. The same is said of S. Godfrey, Bishop of Amiens. *Surius in vitâ.*

indispensable element of spiritual perfection. Every Friday throughout the year, as we have said, he tasted nothing but bread and water. Often he would forego the water, till the want of liquid parched his mouth and lips so that they cracked⁵ like the earth in drought, piteous to look upon. The physicians, according to the notions of the time, ascribed to this poverty of humours the early loss of his hair and beard. To the prescribed days of abstinence he added a practice of his own, of abstaining from flesh Mondays and Wednesdays, from the Epiphany to Lent. He did the same on the days on which he said mass and the day preceding. So that sometimes, out of Lent, he would not taste flesh for a whole month together. He very rarely ate more than once in the day, and only when induced by the presence of friends. He ever avoided dainty viands, and never tasted seasoned dishes, spices, or sauces. He never liked to be asked, beforehand of what his meal should consist, nor would taste of any dish commended in his presence.

Being continually in prayer, he adopted laborious postures, and those of three degrees. First, he knelt, or rather was continually rising, and falling on his knees, as it were knocking at the gate of heaven. This always with the bare knee on the ground, so that one of them was ever wounded and bleeding, while the other was covered with a protuberance of hard callous flesh. When he had no longer the strength to rise, he continued on his knees, but prostrating his whole body, at intervals, on the ground. And lastly, when too much exhausted to continue this motion, he was fain to con-

⁵ For 'fessa,' we should read 'fissa,' in B. ap. Mart. and D. iii. p. 1793.

tent himself with bowing his head repeatedly. Every day he worshipped every member of Christ crucified from the head to the feet, saying as his eye rested on each, *Adoramus te, Christe*. And every day he said, in addition to the canonical hours, those of the Holy Ghost, and of the Blessed Virgin, adding to these the Office of the Dead.

So great was his contempt for money at this time, that what he received from his pupils he used to place in the window, and sprinkling it with dust would say : "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Sometimes his friends would take it away in jest, or it would be pilfered, without his inquiring after it.

His dress was of the ordinary grey cloth,⁶ a long robe or gown reaching to his feet like the frock of a monk. He would avoid in this respect unbecoming meanness as well as expense, and thought that the estate of a clerk required a fitting appearance.⁷ When he had worn them sufficiently long, he bestowed them on religious women, widows, or virgins under a vow. Caps or gloves, then marks of wealth and luxury, he never used. He did not much indulge in the use of the bath, thinking purity of mind was sufficient. He would not listen to the harp, and instruments of music by which the sense of hearing is gratified. Yet, when afterwards he had a table of his own, he admitted the minstrels⁸ to it, looking on them as poor and in need, though they were ministers of folly.

⁶ 'Grisius,' which Surius renders 'colore cinericio.'

⁷ *Nec abjecta plurimum sed nec plurimum pretiosa, prout clericalis requirebat honestas.*

⁸ *Histriones.*

CHAPTER II.

EDMUND AT SALISBURY.

EDMUND had had many benefices offered him, and some he had accepted. But he never would hold more than one at a time, and on that he would always reside. And ever and anon the love of his old life of study would prevail; he would unexpectedly resign his preferment, and betake himself again to his old abode and occupation in the University.¹ But he was now going to change permanently, not indeed his mode of life, but his position, and finally to quit the schools. His friends were ever entreating him to accept some benefice that would enable him to devote himself to preaching in an unrestricted sphere. He accepted from Bishop Poor the Treasurership in the Church of Salisbury, in which diocese his native place Abingdon was situated. This was not long before the Dedication of the new Cathedral which that Bishop had built. This took place on the feast of S. Michael, 1225, and was attended with great solemnity. The Legate Otho was there, and an abundance of bishops, barons, and knights. Stephen Langton, the Archbishop, preached to the people on the occasion.

From this preferment Edmund sought not the means

¹ Quotiens lectionibus vacare disposuit, solebat nullius expectato consilio resignare.

of luxury or idleness, but a supply of more abundant works of mercy. In these, and in the exercise of hospitality, he was liberal to extravagance. He desired that what was his should be regarded as the common property of the needy. None ever went empty from his doors, but received somewhat, less or more, as seemed to be required by the case ; sometimes bread, sometimes corn, or at the least peas and beans, which he ordered to be boiled, and which, in a time of scarcity, were found very acceptable by the poor. A large empty dish was placed before him at meal-time, and into this he put aside a large share of the portion served up to himself. This was afterwards carried by his almoner to some sick person. If there was no such person to whom he could send it, he would set it with his own hands before pilgrims or other poor travellers whom he might happen to be lodging at the time, serving them himself also with drink sufficient. Besides this, every day he furnished food and clothing to those who stood in need of it, desiring thus to make ready for himself ministers and intercessors in heaven.

And this was not merely a liberal alms-giving out of an abundant, or out of a well-regulated, income. It was a fixed contempt for money, and what money procures. He never would hear any statement of his accounts. He considered it unbefitting his character to enter his store-houses or domestic offices.² Money he would not touch, or so much as look upon, save that which with his own hand he distributed to those who had need. It was always with reluctance that he attended the chapters that were held on business. He even solicited and obtained from the Holy See, special

² Inconveniens hoc esse judicans sui nominis honestati.

letters of exemption from attendance on all suits and causes, such as were tried in the chapter and manorial courts. A most inefficient treasurer he must have been. And sometimes the canons may have wished that brother Edmund had been such a one as Abbot Sampson of S. Edmund's, who had daily laid before him the kalendar or account-book of the abbey. This contained a register of all the customs, rents, receptions, and payments of the Abbey. And the Abbot, who was one who favoured the active rather than the contemplative life, and liked good officers better than good monks, made this volume part of his daily study, "beholding in it, as in a mirror, the reflection of his own integrity."³ So that by the time he had been four years abbot, no one could have deceived him in the value of a penny as to the revenues of the church of S. Edmund the King.⁴ But though Edmund, after a ten years' Treasurership, most likely could not have done this for the Church of Salisbury, yet his brother canons knew his value, and were loth to lose him when the time came. It was a saying of the dean, that Edmund was not so much the treasurer as the treasure of their church.

And, indeed, though the Saints are our examples, yet there are some of their actions which are rather for our admiration than our imitation. Or to speak more properly, ordinary Christians who should take up one or more isolated practices recorded of great Saints, would, in all probability, be led into great error. It is the whole character which gives such practices their

³ *Tanquam ibi consideraret vultum probitatis suæ in speculo.* Joc. de Brakelond, p. 22.

⁴ *Non erat qui posset eum decipere ad valentiam unius denarii.* Id.

proper place and fitness. The virtues of Saints are not moral virtues, or rather, they are the moral virtues exalted to a heroic degree. Moral excellence is not contradicted indeed, but surpassed in their lives. As Augustine shews⁵ that the four cardinal virtues are changed in the blessed in heaven, prudence into contemplation ; fortitude into firm adhesion to God ; temperance into rightly-measured affection ; justice into rectitude of heart.

Edmund's defence of himself in this matter, took a lower and a practically intelligible ground. When Stephen of Lexinton one day remonstrated with him on the bad economy of his household, he answered :—"It is common with the vulgar to taunt churchmen with avarice ; I desire to give no occasion by my conduct for this to be said of me. Also, it is my wish to keep my table ever open to persons of the king's court and other secular persons, that I may thus have the opportunity of gaining them to God."

But with such ideas of the employment of money, we need not wonder that before the first half of the year was expired, he had exhausted his stores of provision, and his money-chest. At best the revenues of the chapter were small at that time, for all the canons had bound themselves to contribute for seven years to the utmost of their ability out of their prebendal estates to the new fabric. When this was the case, Edmund was obliged by his poverty to withdraw into some monastery for the remaining six months of the year. Sometimes this was Merton, more often one in the neighbourhood of Salisbury. The Abbey of Stanley was one he often selected, where his friend Stephen of Lexinton was now

⁵ De Musica, vi. 16.

abbot. It was a Cistercian house in the northern part of the county, not far from Chippenham. It was called from its foundress, Matilda, the Empress's Stanley.⁶

In such sojourns, in truth, he sought less the supply of his necessities, which were indeed few, as the retirement of the cloister and the society of the religious. He conformed in every thing to their rule. He attended all the divine offices in the church of the monastery, and that with a promptness and joy which warmed the zeal even of the professed religious. At matins, which were at midnight, he would be the first in the church, and the last to quit it. It was remembered of him in one monastery, which was honoured by entertaining him on one of these occasions, that on the feast of the Blessed Virgin he would take his station before an altar, and continue through the whole of the long Cistercian nocturns standing immoveable in one position.⁷ So the good looked upon him as a perfect exemplar of religion,⁸ and the remiss were stimulated by shame, that one wearing the secular habit should so much surpass them. "In his mouth was never aught but peace, purity, piety, charity; in his heart dwelt nought save only Christ the source of all these, who thus through him ministered to many the plenteous fruits of love, peace, joy, long-suffering, faith and chastity."⁹

It was from no love of ease or indolence that he thus shunned secular affairs. When he afterwards became archbishop, and they became absolutely necessary, and higher interests were involved than the saving of a few

⁶ Bowles, *Hist. of Bremhill*, p. 102. Not a vestige of it is now remaining.

⁷ *Quamdiu monachorum satis prolixæ durabant vigiliæ.* B.

⁸ *Forma totius honestatis et religionis.* B.

⁹ *Jul. D. vi. (1.)*

pounds, he was active enough ; going as ambassador to Llewellyn, prince of Wales, reconciling feuds between nobles, and undertaking a journey to Rome to plead his own cause against the earl of Arundel. While his conduct now shews the spirit in which he did all this, as forced upon him for the good of others, while his heart and thoughts were elsewhere, in his oratory or his books. His devotion to sacred study was as great now as when he was lecturing every day. And he was not a studious man after the manner of many, surrounded by books, living amid an exciting variety of subjects and authors, commentators, philosophers, canonists, and all the paraphernalia of the library. "His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his law did he meditate day and night." The Holy Scriptures alone sufficed him. The Bible glossed, *i. e.*, with the Church's interpretation, that help which the Holy Spirit has provided for those who would penetrate into its hidden meaning. The time diverted from this study by meals, sleep, or travelling, he considered lost. The attendant of his chamber was ordered to have a light ready at any time of night that he might wish to rise.¹ When he disposed himself to read, on opening the book, he always kissed the sacred page. His books were supported on a desk of some height, and immediately under them was set a carving in ivory, representing the Blessed Virgin on a throne surrounded by the mysteries of redemption. "Thus he had before him at once the letter and the thing, what the book expressed in words, the figures represented in ivory ;" and thus reason and imagination combined to fix his mind on the one object of all his meditation, the wonders of the incarnation. In this way

¹ Chron. Lanercost.

it was that S. Philip Benet, when dying, called for "his book," by which he meant his crucifix. So S. Vincent Ferrer always composed his sermons at the foot of a crucifix, both to beg light from Christ crucified, and to draw from that object sentiments to animate his hearers.²

Thus prayer succeeded to reading, contemplation to prayer, and reading again to contemplation, in a ceaseless round and interchange. If, indeed, change it can be called, when the object is ever one and the same; these different functions seeming in the Saint's mind to be exalted into one, perhaps a near approach to the beatific vision which is their reward hereafter. "This most sweet vision, which," says abbot Gilbert, in his sermons on Canticles, "the Saints may here enjoy, though not complete as it will be hereafter, yet akin to it; akin to it in quality, not in quantity."

It was while canon of Salisbury that Edmund's services were required in a wider sphere. The fame of his virtues had reached Rome, and the pope, who was just now seeking for such men to employ them in preaching the crusade, sent him, among others, a commission for this purpose. This was most likely in the year 1227, in which there was a great movement towards the Holy Land, sixty thousand men having gone from England alone. The commission contained the customary clause authorizing the preacher to receive support, or stipend, called a procuration, from the rectors of the parishes in which he preached. This Edmund refused to do, having only accepted the prebend in the church of Salisbury that he might be enabled to preach the Gospel without burdening any. The district allotted to him was mainly the central counties of Berks, Oxford, Glou-

² A. Butler's *Life of S. Vincent*.

cester, Worcester, though he seems to have extended his preaching from Somersetshire as far as Hereford. Upon this evangelic journey God began to give him the power of working miracles to illustrate and authenticate his preaching. Some of these are recorded. They are all of that secondary class which have been called ecclesiastical miracles. Not cures or gifts of healing, but wonders. And chiefly serving for the comfort and encouragement of their instrument, many of them being known to him alone. While the greater and more decided class of miracles, such as those wrought by S. Edmund's relics after his death, are blessings and relief to sufferers, and serve to the edification of the faithful in general, and to attest the victory over nature which the spirit had wrought while in the flesh.

At a village called Lemestre,³ a young man, moved by his exhortations, was advancing to take the cross from the preacher, when a certain woman, who was beloved by him, and by whose seductions he was held captive, seeing she was about to lose him, caught his cloak and gently drew him back. The hand with which she held him was immediately palsied. She cried out straightway to the man of God, and confessed her fault. Edmund demanded if she too was willing to receive the cross from his hand. On her consenting he placed the mark of the cross on her shoulder, and immediately her hand was restored to her. A similar event occurred again at a different place.

Once, in the Rogation time, he was preaching in Oxford, in the churchyard of All Saints, about three o'clock in the afternoon, when a violent shower came on. The people, who were seated on the ground, began

³ ? Leominster in Herefordshire.

to move off ; but Edmund bade them stay, saying he would beg of God that they might continue to listen to His word without interruption. He was silent a few moments in prayer, and then proceeded with his sermon. Meanwhile, torrents of rain were falling all around, so that the neighbouring street ran like a river, but not a drop fell in the churchyard. A very similar thing occurred at another time, when he was preaching in S. John's churchyard under a tree ; and the same miracle was repeated again at Crick, at Worcester, and at Gloucester.

Nothing of importance was undertaken in the diocese of Salisbury, without recourse being had to Edmund for counsel and assistance. The pious Countess Ella, whom we have already mentioned, resolved, about this time, to found a monastery, proposing to retire into it herself at no distant period. In her pious foundations, and in all her acts, she used the counsel of Edmund, as long as he remained at Salisbury.⁴ "When she had lived seven years in widowhood, after the death of her husband, and had often proposed to found monasteries, to please God, and for the health of her soul and that of her husband, she was directed in visions that she should build a monastery in honour of S. Mary and S. Bernard, in a meadow near Laycock, called in English Snaylesmede, and which was part of her earldom of Sarum. Accordingly, on the 15th of April, 1232, she founded two monasteries in one day ; early in the morning that of Laycock, in which holy canonesses should dwell, continually and most devoutly serving God ;" and, after nones, that of Hinton,⁵ a priory

⁴ Book of Laycock ap. Bowles, Hist. of Laycock Abbey.

⁵ Ibid.

of the Carthusian order. Ella was often visited by Edmund when she was at Laycock, which was very near to Stanley, one of his retreats. She was once very sick of a fever when he came to see her, and, on going away, he promised to send her a physician who would cure her at once. He sent a portion of the blood of S. Thomas the Martyr, and she recovered immediately on receiving it. "The cure," says the biographer, "might probably be owing to the virtue of the relic; but Edmund's prophetic foresight of its effect must be esteemed miraculous." On her recovery, the countess would have made him a rich present of jewels. But he would not so much as look on them. still less accept them.

CHAPTER III.

EDMUND AT CANTERBURY.

HE was now called by God to a wider sphere. His virtue was no longer to be confined to one diocese, but to be brought out in the face of England, as a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid.

Stephen Langton died in 1228, and was succeeded by Richard Graunt. But he filled the see of Canterbury barely three years, dying in 1232, in Italy, on his way back from Rome. It was a troublesome prerogative this that the monks of Christchurch vindicated to themselves at so much cost, that of electing the archbishop. As far as any advantage to themselves was concerned, they had much better have been without it; for they never could succeed in getting the man they would have wished, if left to their own free will. They never could choose independent either of the king or the court of Rome; and, after innumerable vexations, harassing journeys, first to find the king, then to Rome; after delays, hearings, adjournments, mortifications, and expenses, it became quite a chance what stranger they might have for a bishop at last. Not that, as a body, they have any claim to our respect. They brought many of their distresses on themselves, by their vacillation and their servile anxiety to stand well with the court. They had ever taken the political side in all disputes; and every archbishop that had

attempted anything for the reform of the Church, had found his own chapter one of the most obstinate of the component parts of the opposition. John of Salisbury¹ writes of them, "The Canterbury monks seem to hold hatred to their archbishops as part of their inheritance. When Anselm was in exile in a righteous cause, they never offered him aught for his consolation ; Ralph they contemned, William they hated, for Theobald they laid snares, and lo ! now Thomas, without cause, they cease not to persecute."

Their exile and persecution for Langton, though it was not voluntary on their parts, had probably done them good. And they had been favoured in their two last prelates. Richard was of becoming life, and learning sufficient ; and he had journeyed to Rome to lay before the Holy See certain disorders in the administration of the realm. He had procured authority to redress them, but died on his return, and all his labour was lost, and the monks had again to go through the storms and troubles of an election.

On this occasion, the recollection of what they had suffered for Langton threw a weight into the scale of the king's party, and it was resolved to elect a person who should be quite acceptable at court. They pitched on Ralph de Neville, Bishop of Chichester. He was at this time Chancellor ; and, by way of turning a compliment, the monks said in their petition to the king, that they hoped this choice might prove as auspicious as that of the last Chancellor who had been raised to the Archiepiscopal dignity ; alluding to S. Thomas. The allusion might appear injudicious when we remember in what cause Becket had suffered, and that it was Henry's

¹ Ep. ii. 36.

grandfather who had murdered him. But it was not so ; he was now a Saint, the glory of England, the pride of Canterbury, and all parties, the court which had put him to death, the monks who had forsaken him, now claimed him as their own. Their fathers had stoned the prophets, and they built their sepulchres.

Their petition was graciously allowed by the king, and he invested Neville with the temporalities. The monks had only to send to Rome for confirmation. Before they set off, their deputies visited the prelate elect, and begged him to contribute to the expenses of their journey, and the necessary fees of the Roman court. This de Neville flatly refused, as savouring of simony. The monks professed not to be displeased by this specimen of his integrity, and hastened to Rome. The Pope appointed Simon Langton, as an English Cardinal, to make the usual inquiry into the character of the archbishop elect. The report was not very favourable ; but the chief objections were his having lived so long in the court, and his implication in all the secular business of the realm. Gregory thought a fitter person might be found to entrust the see of Canterbury to. The monks were sent back to make a better election.

It was now the turn of the other party in the convent, the party that leaned to the stricter side. Ralph de Neville had been set aside for his worldly temper and occupations. They thought, therefore, they could not do better than take their own Prior John, a monk, grown old within his convent walls, and acquainted with nothing beyond them. He went himself to Rome ; and, as nothing was known of him, the commission of cardinals were directed to examine him in theology. What such an examination was we learn

in the case of another monk of Christchurch, who had been elected to succeed Langton. He was asked, whether our Lord had come down on earth in the flesh ; as to the mode of production of Christ's body on the altar ; what was meant by Rachel weeping for her children ; what was the effect of a sentence given against the right, and what was the canon law on the subject of mixed marriages.² The present candidate, however, was more successful than this brother William seven years before. After a three days' examination in nineteen articles, the examiners reported him sufficiently competent in theology. His age, however, and his simplicity seemed to the pope to disqualify him for a post so arduous. The prior, therefore, at once humbly withdrew his claim, and sought licence to return.

The next choice of the chapter was Richard³ Blundy, Chancellor of York. But when he came to Rome, it was found that he held two benefices to which were attached care of souls, which had been expressly forbidden by the Lateran Council ; and it was besides discovered that Peter de Roches had lent him 2,000 marks, which it was suspected that he had employed in bribing the monks, and had endeavoured to get the Emperor to make interest for him at Rome. And it was known that his principles agreed with his practice ; he had maintained the cause of John, and the doctrine of the royal supremacy.⁴ This was manifestly a bad case, and there was no difficulty in annulling this election.

Three times the chapter had thus exercised their pri-

² Graystones, *Hist. Dunelm.* p. 37.

³ 'Joannes,' Wend.

⁴ A. Wood, *Hist. & Antiq.* i. 83, but he gives no authority.

vilege in complete independence, unfettered by any recommendation open or secret, at court, and had failed to find a man properly qualified. Their ill-success when they had so fair a trial may reconcile us to see their freedom of election so often controlled. The see had now lain vacant nearly three years. Gregory resolved, therefore, to assist their judgment, as Innocent had done in recommending Langton, and accordingly proposed to them the treasurer of Salisbury. There are some persons whose fitness for a particular office is such, that every one at once recognizes it, and they occupy it when it falls to them as naturally as the heir succeeds to his father's throne. This was the case with S. Edmund. As soon as his name was mentioned, the choice approved itself to all, both at Rome and in England. The deputation of monks who had received the recommendation at Rome, had no powers from their convent to elect, and were obliged to return to Canterbury. There was some opposition within the convent from the party who feared the severity of the ascetic Edmund, but it was overruled and the election was made.

Throughout the realm there was but one dissentient voice—and that was his own. When the messengers who had been despatched to announce to him his election arrived at Salisbury, he was absent. The dean, hearing their business, said, "Your coming is both welcome and unwelcome; welcome for the honour done our church in taking your primate from among us; unwelcome for the loss we shall sustain." The messengers found him at Calne, not far from his favourite retirement, Stanley Abbey. His household gave vent to their joy at the news by clapping their hands.⁵ And

⁵ Familia plaudit manibus. B.

one of them entered the chamber in which Edmund was intently wrapt in study to announce it to him. He was surprised to be met only by a rebuke for his unseasonable intrusion, and was bid to be silent. He withdrew in confusion, and none dared after this to make the attempt again. Not the least surprised were the messengers themselves that he did not rush out to welcome them.⁶ They had had lately to announce more than one election, and had probably never yet met such a reception. At his accustomed hour, neither sooner nor later,⁷ he came out of his chamber and saluted the strangers. When they had declared to him the object of their mission, he began to weep, saying, "I am a worm and no man; I have neither the virtue nor the literature that you suppose in me. Men are much deceived in their opinion of me." And he besought them earnestly to transfer their choice to some one more worthy. The next day, they prevailed on him to accompany them to Salisbury; and here the bishop, and his brother canons, joined in urging him to consent. But he remained immovable in his refusal, and returned again to Calne. The deputation from Canterbury followed him here, and represented to him that by his obstinacy he might be the cause of great mischief; for if he did not accept the see, some one might be put in from whom the church might receive much damage. Overcome at last by their earnest entreaties he yielded, or seemed to yield, for he would not give any express consent, but only said, "He who knoweth all things, knoweth that I would never consent to this election,

⁶ Admirabantur non modicum, quod illorum non prosiliret ocius in occursum. Id.

⁷ Non tardius solito nec celerius. Id.

did I not fear I might otherwise be committing a mortal sin." Content with this, as it was all they could get, they force him into the church, and prostrate on the ground before the holy altar, chant alternately the *Te Deum*, sounds of weeping and sorrow mingling with notes of joy. He was elected on the vigil of S. Matthew, 1233, confirmed at Rome on the vigil of S. Thomas, and consecrated at Canterbury on the 2nd of April, 1234.

His exaltation changed in no respect the austerity of his life or the temper of his mind. He was only the more careful to watch against any elation of heart on this account, and his humility was more conspicuous than before. He assumed neither purple nor fine linen, but wore his old vest of white, or grey wool, though, that he might not offend others, he put over it a robe suited to his condition. He would often draw off his shoes with his own hand, which, in the Primate of all England, was a notable sign of lowliness of spirit.⁸ On leaving the chapel, he would sometimes carry his cross himself to his chamber. If any of the clerks who attended him had been prevented from hearing mass at the ordinary time, he would himself say one for their use. When travelling, if any one, no matter how humble, requested him to confess him, he would dismount at once, and hear his confession on the spot with the utmost kindness and devotion, and never refused, either on account of the unseasonableness of the hour, or because the place at which he was to rest was not far.⁹

⁸ In primate totius Angliæ humilitatis indicium singulare. Id.

⁹ In curious contrast with this is what is related of an Elector-Bishop of Mayence in the last century ; that passing in his carriage

To himself only was he severe ; merciful and compassionate to all others. He was like "the olive-tree in the house of the Lord," which, to use his own comment, retains to itself the bitterness of its stock, giving forth good gifts to others ; to the hungry food, to those in darkness light, and oil to the faint. But the poor and afflicted were, above all, the objects of his fatherly care. He had ever borne towards them the bowels of love and pity, but now he seemed to give himself up to their service. No beggar ever went unrelieved from his threshold. No traveller of honest condition was ever refused entertainment. He caused his attendants to visit the houses of the sick and infirm, many of whom he maintained as daily pensioners upon him. The daughters of poor men he would provide with a competent portion when they grew up, that they might marry, and bear children in honest wedlock. To this special object he set apart the amer-ciements and fines which were paid in his courts for certain offences.

A certain knight had to pay eighty pounds, for a fine, or relief, of a manor which he held of the see of Canterbury. It was a great exertion for him to raise such a sum. The archbishop received it, but immediately returned it, as a dower to portion out his four daughters, whose marriage must have been otherwise postponed.

The custom of heriots was introduced by the Danes, and prevailed still in some manors. It was, that, on

one day through the streets of his capital, he saw a man taken suddenly ill. He stopped his carriage, and bade his footman fetch a clergyman from a neighbouring church. He had completely forgotten his own possession of the spiritual powers necessary. Robertson, Pref. to Möhler Symb.

the death of the tenant, the lord claimed the best goods, piece of plate, &c., or, more commonly, the best beast of which the tenant died possessed.¹ When this happened, the widows of the defunct, knowing his compassionate heart, would come before him and plead their poverty and distress. He would answer, in English, "Good woman, such is law and the custom of the soil here." And, turning to those who stood by, he would add, in Latin or French, "Yea, and an evil law, and a custom, verily, of diabolical, and not of divine origin, that a poor widow should lose, together with her husband, whatever of most worth her husband hath left her." Then, turning again to the suitor, "If I lend to you the use of this beast, will you keep it for me well?" at the same time ordering his bailiff to restore it.

He steadily refused all presents of whatever sorts. Such gifts were commonly offered to men in power by inferiors; they were not bribes, but were considered legitimate means of propitiating their favour and securing their good offices. But to Edmund they seemed so many snares, tempting him to follow some other direction than the strict rule of justice. "Shall the devil," he would say, "who never could deceive me in this way when I was poor, prevail now that I am rich and want nothing? It is by gifts which are neither given nor accepted as done before God, that Christianity is corrupted in these days; and they will destroy it insensibly, unless God give us his grace to clear ourselves from this plague."² A bishop once sent

¹ Heriot=*here-geld*, the lord's money. Or, *here-gat*, the lord's beast.

² Per dona quæ nec data sunt nec accepta secundum Deum, cor-

him a rich present of plate and jewels. But, knowing something of the archbishop's mind, he gave the commission to one of his clerks who was well known to Edmund, and who would therefore, he thought, be able to prevail with him to accept them. When Edmund resisted all his entreaties, the messenger begged him only to accept a single ring, containing a stone of great value, and this he urged, not for the gift's sake, but for that of the bearer, that he might not have to go away dishonoured. "I have one ring," was all the answer; "what should I do with another?" The bishop thought he might yet prevail, if he offered him somewhat of a less costly kind, and withal of some use. He therefore procured two bed coverlets, the most elegant, however, that were to be had. One of these he gave to Edmund's brother, and prayed that he would only prevail with the archbishop to accept the other. Edmund not only refused, but rebuked his brother severely for his complaisance. "He has, then, gained you, but he shall not gain me; I trust my book," pointing to the Scripture, "rather than your words." As a last attempt, they offered him a silver pix, as though not for himself, but for his chapel. But "in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." "*Prendre* and *pendre*," he would say, "differ but in one letter."

He was particularly jealous in requiring purity of all who were about him. In hiring a servant he would stipulate, that, should it happen that they suffered themselves to fall in this respect, they should receive what was due to them, and immediately quit his household.

rupta est Christianitas, et deficiet priusquam hoc advertant Christiani. B.

The female sex he ever highly honoured and esteemed, both on account of their devotion, and out of reverence to the Blessed Virgin. Many besides the Countess Ella found in him an adviser and friend. A certain baron's only daughter, in Northamptonshire, left an heiress by her father's death, desired to devote herself to religion. By advice of the man of God, she had entered the nunnery of Catesby, of which his sister was the prioress. With this nun he kept up a continual intercourse by messengers, sending her words of support and consolation.³ Being one Easter in the neighbourhood of Catesby, he sent to his sister to desire her to hasten to his court at that festival for their mutual consolation,⁴ and to bring this nun with her. When they arrived on Easter eve, embracing the latter in the presence of all, he said :—"If the world were not more evil in its judgments than we in our thoughts, we would never separate!" At another time when one of his friends was venturing to find fault with him for allowing this intimate friendship to subsist, he meekly made answer :—"If all the actions of my life were to be written on my forehead, I should have nothing to blush for in respect of this description of sins."

His habits of study and devotion he continued, as far as he could, such as they had been at Salisbury. But they were more broken in upon by duty and business than before. The time spent in travelling from place to place he grudged as so much lost. He would spend almost the whole night in prayer, beating his breast,

³ Venientibus et redeuntibus nunciis hanc ut unicam charissimam salutare solebat, et congruis subsidiis relevare. CHRON. LANERCOST, in which 'Northfolciæ' is perhaps a mistake for 'Northantunæ.'

⁴ Causa consolationis venire non desistat. Id.

and falling with his bare knees on the floor, in such a way as to disturb the sleep of his clerks who were lodged in the rooms beneath. Some of them were so weary of these and his other austerities, that they quitted his service on various pretexts. Thus the savour of life was to them a savour of death. In the performance of the mass he handled all the vessels with such a reverence, that the mere sight of it provoked the beholders to devotion. All through the office he was in tears, as though he were beholding with the bodily eye the Lord's Passion being enacted.

Such was his manner of life throughout. Thus he had lived while lecturing at Paris, thus he continued to live after he had laid upon him the care of the whole English Church. Nay, he rather added to, than diminished, the severity of his habits as he grew older. Let us observe the large proportion of his day which was devoted to praise and prayer. Meditation and devotion were his business, his serious occupation, and his temporal engagements a mere break or blank in his existence. This is, in short, the secret of his asceticism. Such extreme mortification of the body, even could life be supported under it, would be torture were the mind unoccupied, or occupied only with temporal things. Love venting itself in praise and assiduous meditation, is the support absolutely necessary to such a life. Hence some who have attempted lower degrees of severity have sometimes failed through want of this mental aliment. "His fall into heresy," Mr. Roper would often say of himself, "did first grow of a scruple of his own conscience, for lack of grace, and better understanding. For he daily did use immoderate fasting and many prayers ; which if discretion and counsel had prescribed, it had been well ; but using them of his

own head, without order and consideration, thinking God never to be pleased therewith, he did weary himself *usque ad tedium*, even unto loathsomeness thereof.”⁵ It is beginning at the wrong end to attempt great austerities (such as are done as penance for sin being excepted) where faith and love are weak. “The extraordinary austerities of certain eminent servants of God are not undertaken by them without a particular call, examined with maturity and prudence, and without a fervour equal to such a state.”⁶

But it would seem that he that is to be brought to perfection, must not only be fortified by an austere self-discipline, but must needs pass through the furnace of outward trial. The trials of active life are generally more formidable and searching to the character, than those to which we are exposed in a life of quiet and seclusion; and so in an ascending scale the wider the sphere, the more momentous the interests, and more important the questions involved: in that degree is the test to which the man is put more active, and the quality of the virtues called into play more refined. Thus it has been said, that an age which produces great men is one which has produced great evils. It is through resistance to a force of more than ordinary magnitude that men are made heroes. High qualities are called out by the vigour of the evil they have to contend with. But the apparent magnitude of an evil is no true gauge and measure of its real iniquity. Those which are popularly thought most of, which excite most clamour under the name of abuses, are generally of the least mischievous class; material evil in some shape or

⁵ Ap. Wordsworth's *Eccles. Biogr.* ii. 118.

⁶ A. Butler, i. 536.

other, such as economical mismanagement, injustice, partiality in the distribution of the goods of this life. But the subtler forms of evil, unseen by the grosser eyes of the generality, are those which are likely to press most heavily on the spirit of the perfect. And we may well conceive that the mind of the Saints, which is "the same mind that was in Christ Jesus," as it assigns their just place and proportion to the divers degrees of good, altering in this the common judgment of men, so it weighs and judges of evil by a very different standard from that prevalent in the world. It cannot but be, that, as the soul advances in love of the good, its sense of evil should become more exquisite. We cannot tell the source or nature of that sorrow which wrought the agony of Gethsemane. No more are we adequate judges what keen pangs a saintly spirit may not feel at the sight or contact of sins that we may overlook.

We have seen what Edmund's private life was ; such as of itself must have produced a saintly character. But it was the trials of his public life which perfected him, which entitled him to the rank which he holds as confessor in the church. For these he was gradually prepared and trained by the private discipline of the church and the cloister. He had gained the victory over the great foe—himself, before a new world was opened out to him to conquer. So untrue is the notion entertained by some, that monastic virtue is hollow and unpractical, affording no security against the temptations of active life ; when, on the contrary, it is the only perfect means of bracing and arming the character.

To sum up shortly, what seems to have been his peculiar trial,—it was, the secular spirit which had invaded the church. To find the world worldly causes no surprise ; that is Satan's kingdom, and in it and

with it he wars as on his own ground, and without disguise, against the children of light. But to come from a life and retirement such as Edmund had hitherto led, from the abstract contemplation of the high calling of the Christian, of the glorious privileges of the children of light, and then to find, in fact, that the very persons who enjoy this calling, and claim to be heirs of these privileges, are themselves most ready to barter them away, are anxious to do away the barrier between themselves and the world, and to amalgamate with what they are professing to renounce, this is to find treachery within the camp of Israel, to look round for friends, and to find them the first to betray the common cause. That the king, the barons, the lay people, some or all of them, should be in opposition to him, might neither surprise nor grieve him. But the bishops were unfriendly ; his own chapter disliked his asceticism ; the legate went against him in everything ; and, worst desolation of all, the very occupant of the Holy See seemed little inclined to support him, if the king or the crown party were to be in anything offended or resisted.

At first the archbishop seemed to make great progress in arranging matters which had been long subjects of contention. For example, the long-standing disputes with the Convent of S. Augustine were set at rest by a composition, both parties abating something from their claims for the love of peace.⁷ These were minor matters, and related to claims of jurisdiction, tithes, and appropriations. For example, the abbots insisted upon having the church bells rung when they entered any parish which belonged to them. This had always been

⁷ Pro bono pacis concedunt. Thorn. ap. X. Script.

resisted by the archbishops, but was now conceded by Edmund. These seem trifles, but they were not, for under them lay hid the really important subject of dispute. The formal cause of all the jealousy which broke out in these details was the exemption which the convent of S. Augustine had procured for themselves from the jurisdiction of the see of Canterbury; which exemption they had gradually extended to several of the churches which belonged to them, and which they were continually aiming to extend to all of them.

The archbishop's difficulties with his own convent were of a graver nature. We have seen how the prevailing party in the chapter had sought to have a man out of the king's court for their bishop, and when Edmund was recommended to them by the pope, they had demurred through fear of his character for asceticism. The account given by Giraldus of his entertainment there helps us to a knowledge of these monks. Passing through Canterbury, and being lodged at the convent, he was invited by the prior to dine with the monks in the refectory. Instead of the three dishes of very meagre quality which the rule of S. Benedict allows, he was astonished by seeing sixteen of a most sumptuous description brought in one after another. The fish and eggs were dressed in every variety of method which the skill of the cook could invent, and accompanied with rich sauces and spices to provoke appetite. After all this a dish of potherbs was brought up, round all the tables, of which they just tasted, to keep up the semblance of Benedictine diet. Tent, claret, and every variety of rich wine abounded, so that beer, for which Kent was especially famous, found no favour. They professed to observe silence during the meal. But what with signs, and signals made by hand, arms, and head,

passing between the prior and the monks who served, messes being sent from the higher to the lower tables, and those who received them returning thanks by gestures, and the hissing sounds they substituted for a call, —“ with all this one might have thought himself,” says Giraldus, “ among so many actors or jongleurs.”⁸ In this state of things they would hardly be likely to wish for the company of S. Edmund. And we can very easily understand how disagreements should arise between them, though we know nothing of their details, and, according to the testimony of a contemporary,⁹ it would not be to the credit of the chapter that we should. “ This year (1188) a dispute arose between the archbishop and the monks of Canterbury, about which the said archbishop journeyed to Rome. And then both parties having laid their case before the pope, it was found and proved that the monks were guilty in certain articles, which, out of respect to that Church, it is better to hide than to speak of. Notwithstanding of the truth of these allegations are many well certified. After the discovery, however, John, the prior of Canterbury, fearing for himself, and out of dread of the severity of the canonical inquiry, resigned his office and passed into a house of the Carthusian order.” The convent, thus destitute of a prior, called on the archbishop to appoint one. This he delayed to do for some reason or other, whereupon the monks appointed one themselves. This infraction of privilege was met by the archbishop by an excommunication of the prior so elected, and of all those who had had any share in his election, and by laying an interdict on their church. The monks interposed an appeal to the pope, and in

⁸ De Rebus a se gestis, ii. 5.

⁹ Annal. Waverl.

disregard of the interdict continued to celebrate and ring their bells at the usual hours.¹

There might seem, at first, little reason to fear that any difficulty could arise to the archbishop on the part of the king—a king such as Henry the Third, of whom even his enemies allowed, that, though “little wise in matters of the world, the more did he abound in devotion towards God.”² It is almost incredible, that not content with hearing three high masses every day, he was assiduous in frequenting other private celebrations.³ But devotion alone, where the other gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make the perfect man, are deficient, will not ensure right action. Good intentions and a pious disposition are only one ingredient in a good will. Henry the Third is a remarkable instance of the harm that may be done by the weakness of an otherwise good character.

Non per far, ma per non fare.
Vedete il Re della semplice vita
Seder la solo, Arrigo d’Inghilterra.⁴

For this he is placed by the poet among children, and others who have lived useless lives, and are punished chiefly by darkness and solitude.

At first, indeed, the archbishop seemed to succeed in his efforts, and to make more progress towards obtaining the settlement of a good government by his representations than all the armed resistance of the earl marshal had been able to effect. Very shortly after his election, and before he was consecrated, the archbishop, attended

¹ The words of the Annals “usque hodie,” in this place, shew that this entry was made at no great distance of time after the occurrence.

² Rishanger.

³ Id.

⁴ Dante, Purgatorio.

a Parliament held at Westminster (Feb. 1234). Here he joined or headed the other bishops in a remonstrance with the king on the lamentable state of the kingdom. The evil complained of was shortly this. Henry did not, like his predecessors, govern himself. He left that for the most part to the great officers of the Crown, who thus became ministers. The party at present about him were Peter de Roches, and the Poitevin, who had made their fortunes under John. They were a small party, hated by the native nobility, and only powerful by their money and their mercenary soldiers. Under the king's name, these foreigners worked their own will and pleasure in the realm. But not without meeting a strong opposition from the native party, far the most numerous, which shewed itself in raids and plundering expeditions against the castles and lands of their opponents. To these they very scrupulously confined themselves, abstaining from the indiscriminate devastations which had been practised by both parties under John twenty years before. Still it was a very serious evil ; the poor people suffered much. The obvious remedy was to get rid of Peter de Roches and his party, and to entrust the government to the chiefs of the native party. This was the object of the advice and remonstrance offered to the king on this occasion by the archbishop. We may wonder that Edmund issuing from such an abstract and contemplative life should have understood enough of the situation of affairs to have been able to judge what was best to be done to cure the existing evils. But politics are very simple to one whose eye is single, and whose aim is only to do good. In every practical question, there is but a right and a wrong ; and it is rare that there can be any doubt on which side the right is to be found.

The king, who was truly desirous of peace,⁵ promised to attend to their petition, but required time to exact the accounts from the present treasurer. On the 2nd of April the archbishop was consecrated ; and, in a Parliament held shortly after, the king dismissed Peter de Roches, sending him back to his bishoprick, and desiring him henceforward to occupy himself wholly with its affairs. Such was the royal authority, that the mere word of a weak and helpless prince like Henry was enough to overthrow this formidable prelate and his whole party.

The king then proceeded to despatch the archbishop into Wales to bring Llewellyn to terms. He was successful in this, and met the king at Gloucester, with an account of his success. It had seemed likely that the disgraced ministers would escape without further notice of their misdeeds, when a new crime of theirs, the issue of which had just come to light, provoked the king to greater rigour against them. This was the death of the marshal, Richard, earl of Pembroke, who had fallen by treachery in Ireland. This had been contrived by letters sent in the king's name to the Irish Lords. A copy of these had fallen into the archbishop's hands, and he now read them before the king and the bishops and lords who were present. At this discovery of the plot that had been laid for his life, all who were present were affected to tears ; and the king among the rest. And the archbishop said, "the real authors of this letter and contrivers of this treachery, whosoever they are, are as much guilty of the death of the earl, as if they had slain him with their own hands." The king declared, that while in the hands of the bishop of Win-

⁵ Qui modis omnibus pacem sitiebat. Wendover.

chester and Peter de Rivaulx, he had ordered his seal to be put to many documents presented to him, without knowing their contents, and that this letter must have been among them. On this, writs were issued to summon the four ministers, viz. the bishop of Winchester, Peter de Rivaulx, Stephen de Segrave, and Robert Passelewe, to render an account of their administration of the treasury, and especially of their abuse of the king's seal. They either refused to quit the sanctuaries to which they fled, or compounded by fines ; and so, for the present, peace and order were restored to the kingdom.

And so, for some short time, they remained. Not but that many things were done, many practices continued, which were very grievous in the archbishop's eyes ; yet still in many the king listened to his counsel. And it is no little praise of any court that one so entirely alien from the easy and accommodating principles of this world as S. Edmund, should have had any weight in it. Henry's court was not, indeed, like that of his saintly contemporary, where a Dominican friar was in more honour than earl or knight, but yet it seemed purity compared with those of the preceding sovereigns. But there are other things equally forbidden by the Law of God, besides coarse licentiousness, and which a minister of God may not pass over unheeded, and in which obedience is perhaps more difficult for one in power, inasmuch as the right and wrong, though plain, are not always so obvious.

William, earl of Pembroke, (elder brother of Richard, who was killed in Ireland,) had died in 1231. His widow, Eleanor, King Henry's own sister, had, in the first excess of her grief, resolved on entering a convent. She had not taken the habit and veil, *i. e.*

made her final profession, but had taken the vow of continence, when Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, who, according to the chronicle, was as tall and goodly a person to behold as he was a brave knight,⁶ succeeded in engaging her affections, and they were married by the king's consent, and in his own chapel at Westminster, by his own chaplain. The archbishop, in whose hands the countess had made her vow, had in vain endeavoured to prevent this breach of it. In order to get rid of his opposition, and to secure himself for the future, Simon de Montfort had recourse to Rome, and procured thence a dispensation. It may be wondered why the archbishop had contented himself with remonstrance on the occasion, and had not at once excommunicated the offending parties. But his jurisdiction was not, at this moment, supreme in England. The courtiers had very early begun to fear that the new archbishop was likely to prove an inconvenient obstacle in their way, and had considered how they might rid themselves of him. At some times, and in some reigns, this could have been done by the short and familiar method of violence, banishment from the court, or the kingdom, if necessary, of the prelate who stood in the way. But Henry would not hear of such a mode of dealing with any bishop, much less such a holy man as S. Edmund. It would answer all the purpose to obtain from the pope a legate, who, acquainted with affairs, would be found more flexible and accommodating. Or, even in case he should not be quite as subservient as were to be wished, he and the archbishop would still be a mutual check upon one another. The legate sent

⁶ Chron. Lanercost.

was Otho, cardinal deacon of S. Nicolas, in Carcere Tulliano, who had been in England before, in Stephen Langton's time. He was received with every mark of honour and respect. The king met him at the water-side, attended by bishops and clergy; and it was particularly noted by such as were great in interpreting little things, that, in saluting him, he bent his head as low as the legate's knees. Some of the bishops who were most eager to secure his goodwill, or had most cause to fear his severity, had sent forward presents to him while he was yet at Paris, selecting, as the most acceptable offering to a cardinal, scarlet cloth. And as soon as he reached England, bishops, abbots, and chapters vied with one another in making him rich offerings, according to their means. Among others, the bishop of Winchester, learning that he was to spend the winter in London, sent him fifty oxen, one hundred measures of wheat, and eight hogsheads of wine, for his provision. But Otho, who knew the jealous opinion that prevailed in England of the rapacity of Roman ecclesiastics, assumed great moderation, accepted some of the presents, as it were out of courtesy, and refused the rest, and altogether, by his discreet and temperate behaviour, obviated some of the discontent which his mission had occasioned. Those who had not been parties to the invitation sent to Rome could see no occasion for it; there was no public quarrel, no flagrant disorder, nothing that called for the mission of a legate.⁷

Edmund, however, understood for what purpose he had been sent for, and complained to the king of his having taken this step without consulting, or so

⁷ Nesciebatur ad quid veniebat. Matt. Par.

much as informing, either himself or his parliament. The sort of retort to which he thus exposed himself was obvious ; that he did not wish to have his jurisdiction infringed and invaded by the presence of a legate. For a legate's power was boundless ; he represented the pope in the province to which he was deputed, and, on all public occasions, he occupied the place which the archbishop of Canterbury would otherwise have filled. When the prince of Wales (Edward the First) was born, the legate, though not a priest, baptized him, the archbishop taking the inferior place of confirming him. And when a council was held in S. Paul's, the legate's seat was, by his own direction, raised above that of all the other prelates present, the two archbishops sitting lower, Canterbury on his right and York on his left.

Nor was the real purpose of Otho's unexpected appearance in England long a secret from any one. He began to exercise his privilege of filling up at his discretion the vacant preferments. He insensibly relaxed his first apparent self-denial, and gradually acquired a goodly array of servants, horses, plate, and furniture. At the same time, at a council that he convoked, he passed many good and salutary canons, or constitutions, for the enforcement of the much needed discipline in the English Church. Thus he offended that large class of the clergy who considered license as their birthright, and claimed a sort of national privilege of exemption from the law of the Church universal, in a double manner, by his canonical rigour, and by his assumption of pomp and state. The spirit in which this class, and they represented the prevailing sentiment, met his reforms was displayed in a speech of the bishop of Worcester. He was Walter de Cantelupe, the son of one of

John's satellites. When the reader came to the statute forbidding pluralities,⁸ he rose, and laying aside his mitre, addressed the legate in behalf of sinecures and pluralities. He represented them as injured men whose property was being attacked, and vested rights invaded. "Many of them," he said, "are men of high birth, and noble English blood, who have lived their whole lives in honour and no mean state, their doors ever open, both for hospitality and for alms. Would you by one stroke deprive these of the means of this magnificence, and condemn them in their old age to an ignominious poverty? Others again are young, fiery spirits, vigorous hands, and be assured they will never submit tamely to be stripped of their benefices. I judge of them by what I feel within myself. Before I was advanced to the episcopal dignity I resolved within myself that sooner than surrender peaceably, on the pretext of any such canon as the present, one of the benefices I now hold, I would run the risk of losing all. There are numbers of us in a like disposition. We beseech you, therefore, as you regard your own welfare⁹ and ours, to refer this constitution to our lord the pope before you resolve on enforcing it." The legate was not a Pandulph, nor had he an Innocent the Third to support him. This insulting defiance was so evidently well received by the

⁸ These provincial councils were not held for the making new canons. Such could only be made in a General Council presided over by the pope. But a selection was made previously by the legate, with the advice of a select number of the prelates, of such canons (of the ivth Lateran council chiefly) as were considered most needed or most seasonable for the particular kingdom or province. These were then read in the Synod and accepted by them, after which they became the canon law of the Province.

⁹ Salutem.

assembly that he was obliged to temporize, and to promise to take these arguments into consideration. After such a moral demonstration, however, it is manifest, that, whatever statutes might be passed at this synod, they would remain a dead letter.

The legate met with another repulse about the same time, in an attempt he made to extend his authority into Scotland. "The Church of Scotland," said pope Gregory, in the brief which he forwarded to him for this purpose, "depends immediately on the apostolic see, which is its only mother and metropolis. It would therefore be little fitting that this, our own special child, should lack our special love and consolation, or be deprived of that benefit of our legate's visitation which we are indulging to the neighbouring kingdom."¹ But discipline in this Church was still more decayed than in the English; national customs had superseded the canons to a greater extent, and the mass of the clergy were as little disposed as prepared to submit their state to the judicial eyes of a legate. They fell back for protection upon the laity, whose interest was equally concerned in the maintenance of things as they were. They professed that the national honour was touched by this unwarrantable intrusion of the legate. The king himself (Alexander the Third) advanced to meet Otho at York. A legate's visitation, he assured him, was quite unnecessary; there was nothing amiss in the Church of his realm. Both himself and the barons were very well satisfied; Christianity flourished; the Church was prosperous.² Such assurances, and coming from such a quarter, only produced the contrary effect

¹ Epist. Greg. ix.

² Christianitas floruit, ecclesia prospere se habebat. Matt. Par.

to what was desired, and the legate was more than ever convinced of the necessity of his presence. Then the king declared that if he came he could not answer for the consequences, such was the unpopularity of himself and his office. However, the legate persevered. The claim of the pope to visit the Church of Scotland was so indubitable, that it could not be resisted, however unpalatable it might be ; and accordingly, two years after we find the legate at Edinburgh holding a synod, and attempting to revive something of the lost spirit of the Church among the degenerate clergy of that kingdom.

We have dwelt on this spirit of opposition to the legatine visitation, as it opens to us the tone and temper of the English Church in the time of S. Edmund. And unhappily not in S. Edmund's time only, but throughout its whole history, from the later Saxon times to Henry the Eighth, we can trace the working of the same corrupt leaven. Our island has justly to boast of her great Saints, of the abundant zeal and high munificence of her nobles, and the earnest devotion of her people. But when from those illustrious examples we turn to look at the condition of the mass of the clergy, when we close the lives of the Saints, and open the page of general history, we find a prevalent temper of covetousness, ambition, and sensuality almost the characteristic of the clergy, secular and religious, alike. And from such habits of life spring, as the natural growth, the peculiar political doctrines, the national bias of our clergy, their leaning to the crown rather than the pope, to the visible rather than the invisible kingdom, their jealousy of foreign interference, their preference of laws made by a parliament composed of men of the world, to canons enacted in the spirit of the Church. In the eyes of the contemporary monk of St. Alban's,

who chronicled his proceedings, the legate Otho was a poor Italian, who was sent to England to make his own fortune and that of as many of his friends as possible, to extort money under diverse pretexts his sole occupation; and we have some difficulty in recognizing the same Otho who accompanied Louis the Ninth to the Holy Land, and whom we find in company with that Saint, burying with his own hands the corrupting corpses of the Christians before Sidon.

We may suppose how Edmund felt this evil; indeed it came home to him in every direction, on every occasion on which he had to act. Yet the clearness with which he saw, and the keenness with which he felt the evil, did not lead him to a violent and uncompromising warfare against it. Loud denunciations and declamation against abuses are not arms that can be used on behalf of the Church. Such evils are to be fought against by the silent prayers and unseen mortifications of holy men. Some even thought the archbishop too remiss and lenient.³ One of the bad practices of the time was that of the clergy, and even those of the regular orders, exercising the offices of the king's justices itinerant, and sitting in other of the king's courts. The bishop of Lincoln, the celebrated Robert Grosteste, was very urgent with the archbishop to check this disorder, which was encouraged by the king, though it had been prohibited again and again by councils.⁴ One of those who lived with him, presuming on this familiarity, ventured to remonstrate with him, saying it would be better to lose his archbishoprick than see his Church so oppressed. He answered, that if the

³ A multis reputabatur minus justo rigidus. B.

⁴ Epist. Rob. Gr. ap. Raynaldi, an. 1237.

possession of the archbishoprick was of more value to him than the clay under his feet, he would at once resign it.

Not, however, that he was inactive. Such was the opposition he experienced from his own monks, that it could not be settled without an appeal to Rome. He undertook the journey himself, and a deputation of the monks followed. He wished for an amicable adjustment of the dispute. This was apparently effected; when the monks, without any previous notice, presented a list of charges against the primate himself. What they were we do not know, but we can easily imagine them. However, the state of the case was quite understood at Rome, and the monks' petition was dismissed with ignominy.⁵ It happened during his stay at Rome, that on the feast of S. Gregory, the pope (Gregory the Ninth) invited the cardinals and all the prelates who were at Rome at the time to a banquet.⁶ The archbishop of Canterbury, though urged to go by his friends, stayed away, and was the only one absent. On this very occasion the nephew of the cardinal of Præneste was assassinated in the pope's presence. It was thought by all that Edmund had been providentially kept at a distance that he might not be obliged to look on this deed of blood.⁷ Such was, even then, the opinion entertained of him.

He returned to his see, but not to peace. The king had never forgotten his opposition to his sister's marriage with Simon de Montfort. This had first alienated

⁵ Turpiter rejectis, et penitus reprobatis, cum extrema recesserunt confusione. MS. Fell.

⁶ Ad caritatis poculum. B.

⁷ Ne Sancti ejus violaretur obtutus, Dei providentia id fiebat. Id.

him from the archbishop, into whose arms he had at first thrown himself, and to whose counsels he had listened exclusively. But the king's marriage had further weaned him from Edmund's influence. It had brought a new set of courtiers about him ; Provencals, relations of the young queen, Eleanor, daughter of Raymond, Count of Provence. Her uncles soon got the management of the king into their hands, and aimed only at turning it to their own profit. Under these circumstances, it became very difficult to obtain grants of money from the parliament. Their reluctance increased every year ; indeed Henry had almost to purchase the aids he required by some fresh concession, some further abridgment of the prerogative of the crown. The sources of revenue that were independent of the great council of the barons, became thus of more importance than before. Among these, a very fertile one was the produce of the vacant sees and abbeys. This was now regarded as a settled regular portion of the royal income. It was no longer looked upon as an invasion of the rights of the Church, but as a matter of course, that they should be kept vacant several years for the benefit of the treasury. We hardly ever find a see filled up under two years. And, the richer it was, the less chance it had of being speedily provided for. And the mode of prolonging the vacancy was no longer by threats or actual violence, as Rufus had done, but by the vexatious delays of law and form. The monks or canons of the vacant see had first to find the king ; then, after following his motions from place to place, license to elect was issued, when it could be no longer withheld. Then they returned to their chapter to elect ; then again to the king to announce the election. Then the king considered of the election ; at last objected to

it;⁸ and the monks returned to make a fresh choice. If this was refused, perhaps the electors appealed to the pope. And so in going backwards and forwards to Rome, not then a journey of ten days, but of three months, we can easily see how months and years might be disposed of. While the king's treasury was the only gainer, the diocese or monastery was the loser. No wonder that chapters were always so disposed to rebel against their bishops, for by these long intervals of anarchy they acquired habits of independence. When he did come, and attempt to exercise his legitimate authority, they looked on him as a usurper, an intruder.

All these evils of the practice were set forth by the archbishop in a complaint addressed to the holy see, in which he prayed that a custom so ruinous to the Church might be put an end to; and proposed that when a church of any description had lain vacant six months, the archbishop of the province should be empowered to fill it up himself. Nothing could appear more reasonable; the pope seemed to consent, and S. Edmund thus had fair hopes of gaining for the English Church this, the last article, necessary to complete the freedom, which S. Thomas and Stephen Langton had so hardly earned. But the court of Rome waited for advices from Otho. He suggested that such a bull would alienate the king, whose revenue it would touch. And Henry was so excellently disposed towards the pope, and so ready to attend to the suggestions of the legate, that it would be a pity to offend him. This, which was certainly sensible and sound policy, prevailed at Rome; the letters which had been actually issued were recalled, and the archbishop's petition set aside.

⁸ Per cavillatores quos ad hoc tenuit conductitios. Par.

The consequence of this at home was, that the archbishop was looked upon as a defenceless prey, whom every one might attack and plunder that would. Enemies he could have none personally ; but there are some men whom the mere passive resistance of the weak enrages, and who are indignant that they are not sufficiently quiet under injury. Nobles and barons invaded the property and privileges of the see, as if they had a right to them. The Earl of Arundel took possession of a manor, the wardship of which fell by right to the see of Canterbury. Even Hubert de Burgh, whom Edmund had been the means of restoring to the king's favour, turned upon him. The Earl of Arundel appealed to Rome, and the archbishop was cast.

Another victory was gained over him by the convent of Rochester. John had made over to Stephen Langton the patronage of this see.⁹ That is, not that he had given the archbishop the nomination of this suffragan, for that was not the king's to give ; but he had assigned to the metropolitan all the rights over the see of Rochester that were the king's. The archbishop was henceforth the lord or patron of this ecclesiastical fief ; was to give investiture of the temporalities, or regalia, as they were called, when they belonged to the king ; to have the custody of them during vacancy ; and to him were to be done all the services which had been done to the king. A vacancy happening at this time, the chapter elected Richard of Wendover. The archbishop refused to confirm the election ; the chapter appealed ; and after the suit had been three years pending, sentence was given against the archbishop.

⁹ See the writ in *Anglia Sacra*, i. 386.

The monks returned victorious,⁴ the archbishop submitted, and consecrated Wendover with his own hand.

An anxious part of the archbishop's duties was the state of the old monasteries. The greater part of the larger and more important monasteries in the kingdom were of old foundation, and filled by what were then called, from their dress, Black monks. We call them Benedictines, to distinguish them from the various later Orders introduced since the Conquest. But we should have a false notion of them if we supposed that they observed, or were under, the rule of S. Benedict immediately. That might be the form and prototype of their rule, but in fact each separate house was regulated by its own set of rules, the growth of time and usage, or rather lived according to usage and custom, without any code or written rule. They were Benedictines only because they were not Cistercians, Præmonstratensians, or of any of the later Orders. Now the Cistercians, as is well known, were merely a revival of the original rule of S. Benedict, and nothing more. So that if the Black monks had had any title to the appellation of Benedictines, they must have been nearly identical with the Cistercians—Cistercians in a black gown. But nothing could well be more different. The Black monks never thought of themselves as in the same class of persons, as congregated under one roof for the same purpose, as the newer Orders. It was not that flagrant misconduct and immorality prevailed in these establishments. There were cases of such no doubt, and that in religious houses of every class, new and old ; but these were the exceptions and not the rule ; and they were abhorred by all,

¹ Redierunt cum summa victoria. Edm. de Hadenham, Anglia Sac. ii. 349.

and punished accordingly. Even in the sixteenth century, when discipline was still more lax, the visitors had to stretch falsehood and exaggeration to the utmost to make out their case, and to give a colouring to their sacrilege, by establishing the charge of immorality against the monks in general. And in the thirteenth century this was still further from being the case. It was a less tangible, and therefore more hopeless species of corruption that had invaded the older houses. They were not debauched, far from it ; but they seemed to have quite forgotten the original notion of a monk, and the primitive intention of the cloister. Or rather they had not forgotten it : they knew very well what it was ; they read Cassian and Sulpicius Severus ; but they looked upon all this as no longer applicable to their times and circumstances. Nay, the rule of S. Benedict itself was not forgotten, it was read on certain days in chapter. Many of the more important ordinances, and a still greater number of the minute and circumstantial directions were kept to the very letter. And for such as were not kept, immemorial usage to the contrary, founded on a good reason, would have been alleged at once to an objector. So that no one's conscience was troubled, and no sense or perception of inconsistency between their practice and their profession remained. When, in 1249, Innocent the Fourth sent round certain questions or injunctions to the abbeys in England, most of them could have confidently answered with that of S. Alban's, to each article "Observatur ;" "Observatur per omnia." But we can understand by the example to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, how this might be true, how the rule might be kept, and yet the whole spirit of the monastic life might be fled. In a great part of the colleges, as at present conducted, very much,

much more than is often thought, of the letter of the statutes is kept, when nothing of the spirit of the original foundation remains. The fellows are now independent gentlemen, drawing a private income from the common estate, which they spend as they like ; but the foundations were for poor students to live in common under the absolute control of their head. So monasteries had been founded for the supernatural life of prayer and praise, aided by severe bodily mortification. They had become comfortable homes, in which priests lived much in the ordinary way, a regular, sober, easy, unlaborious life. It is true they had to rise early, had poor fare, little flesh meat (at least in well-regulated houses), were much confined to the limits of the cloister, and in other respects enjoyed less liberty of action than the secular clergy. But we must take into consideration, first, the compensations which are to be set against these constraints, such as their freedom from toil and care, the pleasures of literature, and the satisfaction which an innocent, peaceful, and religious life confers. And, secondly, we must compare the life of the monk with that of the class from which they came outside the walls of the cloister; in comparison of which it might be considered one of comfort, and often of luxury. The conventual dinner of salt fish and vegetables, though carefully dressed and neatly served, seems little inviting ; but it was more and better than many of the brethren had often been accustomed to as children at a yeoman's board. The habit was coarse, and plain, and inconvenient ; but it was better than tatters. The offices might be long and sometimes wearisome ; but a day's thrashing or ploughing was much more laborious. No wonder that a "monachatus," a monk's place in an abbey of much less wealth and splendour than Canterbury or S.

Edmund's, was an object of ambition among a numerous class. If one felt an inward call to a religious life, there were the Cistercian and Carthusian houses, or, at the time we are now speaking of in particular, there were the new Orders of the friars; but the black hood was very eligible from motives of a much more worldly character. There was no harm in their attachment to an easy, comfortable life, but it was not the object of their institution, nor was it this which entitled them to be called Benedictines. If, then, to recur to a former illustration, we try to imagine the probable effect if an archbishop of Canterbury were to announce his intention of visiting the several colleges and halls which are subject to the visitation of one or more of his suffragans, and that with a view not only to inquire rigidly into how statutes framed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were observed, but how far the spirit in which a Wykeham or a Waynflete drew up those statutes, was kept alive; he, the visiting archbishop, being one reputed equal or superior in austerity and holiness to Wykeham or Waynflete — if we try to imagine how such a proposal would be received by those most concerned, how wild, impracticable, and chimerical it would appear, we may have some idea how the Black monks were affected when they received intimation that S. Edmund proposed visiting the abbeys in the diocese of London, on the ground that the bishop of London was remiss in the execution of that part of his pastoral functions. The alarm was great, for if the legate had attempted to enforce that obsolete clause of the rule of S. Benedict,² which absolutely prohibited the eating of animal food,³

² Reg. S. Ben. c. 39.

³ Carnium quadrupedum.

what other forgotten clauses might the archbishop be expected to call their attention to?

But their fears were soon removed. The bishop of London stepped in. He considered his jurisdiction invaded by this proposal, and appealed to Rome, pleading that a metropolitan could not visit the monasteries in his suffragan's diocese, where the suffragan was not remiss in visiting himself. It seemed thus a question of canon law; but it was not so, nor was it even a question of fact, as to whether the bishop did visit his monasteries, but, in reality, it was one of opinion, as to what might be considered remissness. And this was one in which S. Edmund was sure to be in a minority. On whatever ground, sentence was given against him, and the monks were saved.

Edmund was not quite singular, however, in his views respecting the old monasteries. It was an object much at heart with the good prelates of the time to revive the severity of discipline in them. The bishop of Lincoln, the famous Grosseteste, at the same time, made a similar attempt to visit (for that was the form the question took) the chapter of Lincoln, or, as Matthew Paris expresses it, "turned to molest and persecute the monks."⁴ They claimed to be visited only by the dean, and considered this a most ungrateful return of the bishop for their favour in electing him, and they told him publicly that they bitterly repented having raised him from among themselves thus to tyrannize over them.

Edmund was in much the same situation with respect to his own chapter at Canterbury. He had laid an interdict on their church, which they neglected,

⁴ Factus est malleus et immanis persecutor monachorum.

on the ground of having appealed to Rome against it, where the cause was still pending. They looked upon themselves as aggrieved, as wantonly attacked by him.⁵ Thus he was surrounded by enemies, who insulted his weakness and despised his efforts on behalf of the Church. Yet to all he exhibited outwardly the same gracious and benign deportment, behaving even to those who did him most wrong with the utmost charity and tenderness. He admitted all, even to the kiss of peace. Some of his friends told him that he carried this too far, that he made no distinction in favour of such as remained friendly to him. "Why should I offend God," he answered, "and lose the charity which I owe them? If any were to pluck out my eyes or cut off my arms, they ought to be dearer to me on that account, and would more deserve my compassion for the sin which they had committed in their ignorance." Tribulation, he said, was like the wild honey on which John the Baptist fed in the wilderness, bitter at once and sweet. He says in his "Mirrour,"⁶ "If we were good, we should have no friends but the good, no enemies but the bad. We ought to love the good because they are good, and the bad because they might be good; and so we shall love all men for the sake of goodness."

He made a last attempt, accompanied by some of his suffragans, to influence the king. But what could be expected from a man who would promise anything, with tears and regrets for the past, to such an application, but, as soon as the archbishop had quitted his presence, would forget both his sorrow and his promises. Henry

⁵ Aggravavit Ædmundus manum suam super monachos suos. Matt. Par.

⁶ Cap. 30.

was at this time entirely in the hands of his wife's kinsmen ; and the whole case is shortly expressed by Robert of Gloucester :—

He drou to other conseil than he was iwoned to do,
And of the rigtes of holi church, and of the gode old lawe
That he adde of is chartre ymad, he him gan withdrawe,
Saint Edmund pitosliche and ofte him besougte
That he withdrawe of is dede and bet him bethogte.
Ac it was ever the long the wors.

And they always had the legate to support them, with whose countenance how could it be thought that anything was amiss ? Among other things, a papal brief arrived at this time, addressed to the archbishop and the bishops of Lincoln and Salisbury, ordering them to provide for three hundred Roman clergy out of their first vacant benefices, and suspending them from collating to benefices till that number was provided for.

The archbishop was now thoroughly weary of his office. He saw that he could do nothing as he wished, and as he knew he ought to do it. His reforms were merely ridiculed, set aside without question, or even opposition ; all men were agreed that they were fanciful, unpractical schemes. He was in the difficult situation of one who finds himself called to obey, in a public station and in his public acts, a law which none of those about him recognize, which they smile at as over-scrupulousness. An ordinary person, under such circumstances, will yield, if not in all, in some respects, or make a compromise, by surrendering something for the sake of retaining the rest. It seems impossible to him that he alone can be right, and every one else in the wrong. Besides this, the influence of the opinion of those with whom we habitually converse, though

imperceptible in its progress, is yet one of the most certain to which we are subjected. But the Saint has another sort of certainty of the truth of what he has learned, of the inflexible nature of the rule he has lived by. It would be unbelief in him to yield or to compromise ; it would be parting with what is not his to give away. It is not for himself or his own objects that he is contending. Particular points in dispute he will readily resign, but fall into the way of thinking and acting of the world around him he cannot. Thus S. Edmund now saw that all resistance was hopeless ; its edge was turned by the shield of careless contempt. The men who opposed him had no thought of whetting the spirit of the better class of churchmen, and kindling an opposition, by violent or active measures, against the reformer ; they merely neglected him. They did not want to persecute him ; they only wished to go on peaceably in their own way, as they had done before. While, on the other hand, he saw that, if he stayed and was silent, he could not avoid being considered to acquiesce in, if not to approve, what was being done before his eyes.

But it is not an improbable conjecture that he may have had a special call to act as he did, in withdrawing from the kingdom ; perhaps of such a nature as a vision he had after his resolution was taken, but before he quitted Canterbury. S. Thomas the Martyr appeared to him, and seemed to offer to him encouragement and consolation. Edmund attempted to kiss his feet, but the vision forbade this, and withdrew them from Edmund's approach, which caused him to weep, as not being thought worthy to touch the blessed Saint. But, said S. Thomas, "Weep not, thou shalt shortly kiss, not my feet, but my face." At another

time, it seemed to him that he had entered the church of Canterbury for the purpose of prayer at the Martyr's shrine, and that S. Thomas appeared to him, and, with a gracious countenance, said, "I know, father, that thy wish is that I should show thee the wounds in my head." At these words, he seized Edmund's hand, and, passing it over his head, allowed him to feel the scars of the wounds, stooping down for the purpose.

When about to set out, he communicated the secret of his departure only to a few of the religious, whose hearts he knew. They asked him, at once, if his destination was Pontigny. "Yes," said he, "to Pontigny we go; and there, if it please God, shall we work all good works." This, taken in a different sense from that in which it was probably spoken, they understood afterwards as prophetic of the miracles he was to perform after death. Other instances of a foresight almost prophetic had occurred before, in intimations he had given to Albert, archbishop of Armagh, and William, bishop of Winchester, of the issue they should obtain out of certain troubles in which they were involved.

His departure from London resembled a secret flight.⁷ On a rising ground, from which was a view of the city, he halted, and turning towards it, he gave his solemn blessing to his country, and his curse on the sacrilegious marriage of the Countess de Montfort and its offspring.⁸

He experienced fully the truth of that, a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. When he arrived in France, he was met at Senlis (department of the Oise) by queen Blanche, the mother of S. Lewis.

Clandestine et quasi fugiens. B.

⁸ Super monticulum prope civitatem Londoniæ. Chron. Lanercost.

She brought her sons with her, commending them and herself to his prayers, and begging his blessing for them. The interview was long and affecting. She besought him most earnestly to stay with her, to do that for France which he had not been permitted to do for England, that the realm might be governed by his counsel.⁹ But he was flying from the courts of princes, and did not want only to exchange one for another, great though the difference was between Henry's riotous brothers-in-law and the children of queen Blanche. His heart was set upon Pontigny. But he promised, at the pious queen's request, that the kingdom of France, and the welfare of the king, should never be forgotten in his prayers. And so he took his leave, and hastened on to Pontigny.

⁹ Exposuit nutui suo regnum Francorum. Jul. D. vi. (2).

CHAPTER IV.

EDMUND AT PONTIGNY.

FAR away in Burgundy, about ten miles to the left of the high road, whose undeviating line pierces through that province on its way to Lyons, stood this famous abbey. It was in the territory of the counts of Champagne, and formed the extreme northern point of the diocese of Auxerre. The Serain, a stream which washes the cloister walls, inconsiderable in size, yet formed the limit of so many different jurisdictions, that a popular saying was current, that three bishops and an abbot might dine on its bridge, without quitting their respective territories. The bishops were those of Auxerre and Langres, with the archbishop of Sens and the abbot of Pontigny. When Hugh of Macon first conducted hither his twelve monks from Citeaux (in 1114), it was a savage wilderness, penetrated only by the seigneur in the pursuit of his game. But a century and a half, and the labour of the Cistercians, had brought the neighbouring country by the middle of the thirteenth century, into much the condition in which it is at the present day. The monks had ceased to labour themselves, but they had introduced the vine for which those sunny slopes seem purposely created; a small village of peasant dependants had grown up under their protection, and a laughing country rich in corn and wine spread around the abbey in a circle which was widening

every year. The traveller who finds his way to this, once again, obscure spot, whether he approach it from the north or the south, from Troyes or from Auxerre, beholds at a distance, on a slightly rising ground, the still imposing mass of the conventual church. Simple and wholly devoid of ornament, like all the Cistercian churches, in the architecture of the twelfth century, it has three peculiarities which, united, produce the most singular effect. These are, its long, plain line of high-pitched roof of slate, unbroken to the eye by battlement or finish of any sort ; the absence of all tower or bell-turret ; and, above all, the uniformity of its style, the whole, nave, choir, sanctuary, and transepts, having been raised at one time, by one effort, and on one and the same plan. It is, perhaps, one of the most perfect monuments remaining of the original and rustic spirit of Cîteaux. And it alone remains, the work of the pious Thiebault, count of Champagne, carrying us back at once to the apostolic age of monasteries ; while all that represented later times of degeneracy, the sumptuous and magnificent range of buildings that covered acres, and revealed the sad tale of the victory of the world over faith ; that spoke of commendatory abbots, of vast revenues acquired by simony and spent with ruinous prodigality ; all this is swept away as though it had never been. We do not regret that they are gone, they were intruders upon holy ground. Dom Nicholas de Chanlatte, with his revenue of sixty thousand francs, and grand abbatial lodge ; the rendezvous of the elegant society and choice spirits of the regency ; the model of courtesy and good taste ; the admirer of Voltaire.¹ All these are past like a dream,

¹ At its suppression, in 1790, the abbey of Pontigny had thirty

or like one of those cavalcades of spectres which the mirror of the magician professed to exhibit to the awe-struck gaze of the spectator ; and we seem to awaken to truth and life when we see the two or three priests of the mission, in primitive poverty and humility, amid the dirt, damp, and squalid ruin that surrounds them, witnessing to the indestructibility of the faith in the presence of an unbelieving generation ; and reduced to pray almost alone at the forsaken altars, for a population that has ceased to pray for themselves.

But neither the magnificence of the eighteenth, nor the melancholy desolation of the nineteenth, nor what was the actual prospect that offered itself to his eyes in the thirteenth century, viz., the rich cultivation of valley and plain, were what drew S. Edmund to Pontigny. Indeed, it is little probable that he noticed its outward attractions. After a life spent in mortifying the senses, there is little room or disposition in the Saint's mind, even for that refined indulgence of them which we call admiration of nature. S. Bernard, after walking for a whole day amid the most glorious scenery in the world, on the shores of the lake of Geneva, when one in the evening spoke of the lake, astonished his companions by asking, where the lake was ? And so ever with the Saints, on their slow and tedious journeys, while the mouth was occupied with the psalms, and the thoughts with God, vineyard, meadow, and orchard, forest and cultivated field, passed by unnoticed and undistinguished. Pontigny was to Edmund an abode of silent mortification,

dependent houses ; a revenue of 74,000 francs, and a debt of 348,000. In 1750, Dom Grillot, the predecessor of Dom Chanlatte, pulled down the abbot's lodging, and substituted one on a much grander scale, in the style of the rich and massive chateaux of the time. *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Pontigny. Auxerre, 1844.*

where he might return again to his old life of Merton or Stanley, and have again the company of Cistercians, which had been ill-exchanged during six years for that of his rebellious monks of Christ Church. It was sanctified by the presence of Becket and Langton, and a host of their companions in exile ; it kept up a sort of connexion with England, and was even bound to himself by the tie of gratitude, having received from him, only two years before, the grant of an annual pension.²

He was received by the monks with becoming honour and reverence³. He was lodged at first not in the cloister, but close by, in a separate house, the very same, or on the same ground, as that which S. Thomas had occupied for six years. But he did not long continue here. He did not want the luxury and state of a private abode, with its fair and privy chambers, or what seemed such to a monk of Pontigny.⁴ He did not wish to be treated as archbishop. At the request of the abbot he preached to the convent ; and after his sermon he begged of the monks one boon in return, that they would take back their house, which they had assigned him in their hospitality, and would admit him within the walls of the convent on the footing of a brother. It may be supposed how readily he obtained this. He was especially anxious

² In 1238 S. Edmund confirmed the grant of fifty marks made by Langton, adding ten marks more from himself. The sum was to be paid out of the tithes of the church of Rumenall. (Cart. Pont. ap. M. & D. iii.) Richard the Second secured by writ the payment of this pension, not to be interrupted (as it had been) by the war which threatened to break out afresh between the two kingdoms. And it continued to be paid till the Reformation under Henry the Eighth. Hist. de Pontigny, ut sup.

³ Cum summo, ut decuit, honore et reverentia. Jul. D. vi. (2).

⁴ Cum cameris honestis et arcanis. Id.

that no distinction should be made in his favour, but that he should be treated like one of the rest. Only it was allowed that one or more of the brethren might exclusively attach themselves to him more particularly than was allowed by their rule among themselves. He did not enter the Order, nor resign his secular dignity ; perhaps his humility made him shrink from doing what might have been thought by many too conspicuous an act. For an archbishop of Canterbury to have become a Cistercian monk could not but have surprised men. Langton in his despair, had thought of doing so, but had abandoned the idea.

His life at Pontigny was such as it had been of old. Some of his time he employed in writing the *Speculum Ecclesiæ* ; at others he went out to preach in the neighbourhood, in the same way as the other monks did.

After nearly two years spent in this retirement his strength began to fail him ; not from old age, for it was hoped that removal to another air would recover him. The heat of Pontigny was what he was not accustomed to. The physicians advised him to go to the Priory of Soissy, near Provins. S. Edmund, however, was not deceived, he knew that his end was near. When the monks were grieving at his departure, he said to them, to cheer them, ‘I will return on the feast of S. Edmund the king, (November 20,) the summer heats will have by that time past away.’ And he kept his word. For on the 20th, his body was brought for burial to Pontigny. He died at Soissy on the 16th. The faithful monk who had long attended him, accompanied him thither, and was the witness of his last hours. Mindful of that, ‘while we have time let us do good unto all men,’ he was more than ever solicitous to give abundant alms. On his road to Soissy, he gave something with his own hands to every

poor man whom he met. His last strength was expended in going frequently to his door at Soissy and giving alms to the poor pilgrims who passed it. And when he could no longer quit his chair, he assigned this duty to one of his chaplains, bidding him give one, two, or three livres, as he should see occasion, to the traveller, and to take as much as was needed for the purpose out of his chamber.

One day the abbot of S. James' of Provins, wishing to offer something to the archbishop, brought him some stewed quinces, such as are prepared for sick persons ; but he refused them, saying, 'it is now many years since any food calculated to please the palate, entered my mouth.'⁵

When he was about to partake of the Last Sacrament, and the Body of the Lord was brought to him, he stretched out his hand towards it as if to invoke it, and said in a tone of confidence,⁶ 'Thou, Lord, art He in whom I have believed, whom I have preached, whom I have truly taught ; and Thou art my witness that while I have been on earth I have sought nought else besides Thee. As thou knowest that I will only what thou willest, so now I say Thy will be done, for all things are in Thy power.' After receiving the viaticum he was filled with a joy inexpressible, which he strove to express in his native tongue, 'Men say that joy goeth into the belly, but I say it goeth into the heart.'⁷ After extreme

⁵ The Lambeth MS. (No. 135) resembles throughout the life by Bertrand. But there is a variation here which almost seems to denote a different author. The latter says, 'Cum recolendæ recordationis Abbas S. Jacobi de Provino ad comedendum cocta porrexisset coctana.' The Lambeth MS. has 'Cum Abbas Sancti Jacobi de Provino, vel Prior de Soysi, quis eorum memoriæ non occurrit.'

⁶ Cum ingenti fiducia. B.

⁷ Men seid game god in Wombe, ac ich segge non, game gad on herte.

unction he asked that the crucifix, with the images of S. Mary and S. John, should be placed somewhere in his sight. It was brought to him. He took it with tears and groans, and kissed it ; and then taking some wine mixed with water which he had ordered to be made ready for this purpose, he washed with it all the wounds of the figure, and then drank the liquid in which he had washed them, repeating the text, 'ye shall drink water from the fountains of salvation.' This revival of a custom obsolete, and despised as childish, by so great a man, astonished his attendants.⁸ He retained to the last his dislike of a bed, and remained seated, till death actually seized him, when he stretched himself on the ground, so long his only couch,⁹ and yielded up his pure and holy soul without a struggle to heaven. This was on the morning of Friday, November 16th, 1242.

Every one about him was aware what it was that had taken place ; that a saintly soul had entered upon bliss, and that a saintly body was bequeathed to earth. The only fear of the abbot of Pontigny, who was with him when he died, was that Pontigny should not have the honour of the confidently expected miracles. In all the towns through which the body passed, such crowds thronged to meet it, and at least to touch the bier, that the bearers were obliged to call in the aid of the authorities to clear the way before they could approach the church in which it was to rest for the night. His promise or prediction was fulfilled to the letter, for on the very day he had fixed, the feast of S. Edmund the King, his own birthday, his body reached Pontigny. In the

⁸ Defæcatæ devotionis insolitum morem. B.

⁹ Super sibi familiarem stratum recubans, scilicet super duritiem nudæ terræ. Id.

acquisition of this treasure, another prediction was considered by the monks to have its fulfilment. When S. Thomas was leaving the monastery to return to Canterbury, he expressed his regret on taking leave of the monks, that he was not able to repay them for their hospitality. But he added, "God will send me a successor, who shall discharge this debt for me." The pension of fifty marks which Langton had given, was intended in this light; but now they were more amply repaid by the possession of S. Edmund's body.

For now began a series of miracles, the like of which had perhaps never been seen in this part, at least, of the Western Church, since S. Martin; but which in the thirteenth century were certainly without parallel; and this, whether we regard their number, their nature, or the evidence on which they rest. As to their number, seventeen distinct cures were proved by the witnesses before the consistory in order to his canonization. These had been wrought in the six years which intervened between that event and his death. One hundred and ninety-five are enumerated with particulars, in the catalogue which was kept at Pontigny, and which appeared to have been all entered within half a century after his death. But the series was not closed in the seventeenth century. So late as 1672 and 1673 two *procès verbaux* were taken attesting the resuscitation of two still-born children at his tomb.¹ But even this vast number, of which the details were preserved, were considered specimens, and not a full and complete catalogue. And as to their nature, if many of them resemble the miracle of 1672, where a child, still-born, was taken to the tomb of the Saint, and after remaining two hours

¹ Hist. de Pontigny, p. 105.

stretched upon the stone shewed signs of life, but died not long afterwards ; if some of them want that distinct and decisive character which few facts of any sort have, yet, on the other hand, in a great many of the instances given, it is this very distinct and wonderful character which constitutes the main difficulty to our receiving them. For example, thirty of the number are cases of persons raised from the dead. But all objection must be silenced by the nature of the evidence, which is so full, complete, and satisfactory, that all history might as well be rejected if these are to be. We have spoken of that impression of truth which the life of S. Edmund gives, as being written by a contemporary, and an intimate friend. It is so biographical and homely ; minute, though not copious in details, we almost forget that its subject lived six centuries ago. It has not the legendary antique, classical air, remote from our active sympathies, that the Lives of the Saints in general have. This is applicable especially to his miracles. They take their place in the full broad daylight of history, and rank among the other events of the age. They do not lurk in the gloom of the church, or hide themselves within the walls of the cloister. For they fall in an age when suspicion had been awakened, when the probability was beginning to turn against miracles, as it had been in favour of them ; when reason so keenly exercised in the schools demanded that her doubts should be satisfied ; and when the sifting processes of the courts of law were already applied to this very inquiry. And the opposition to S. Edmund's canonization was long and obstinate. Dying humble and neglected and without a party, he might have been forgotten on his death beyond the circle of his immediate friends, but for the weight of his miracles, which seemed to take the kingdom of heaven

by violence. Indeed there had been found detractors in his life who had denied his virtues. His asceticism had been called superstition; his zeal for justice, harshness; his affability, talkativeness.² Nay, he had not even escaped the charge of covetousness, for being obliged to economize to relieve the See of Canterbury of the debt which Langton had incurred on occasion of S. Thomas's Translation, and being besides little inclined to splendid shows and feasts, he had been accused of parsimony as archbishop.³ It is true that this was the language of those who grudged that what he spent in alms to the poor, was not spent in feasting the rich.⁴ But those who judged thus were the majority. Thus public opinion represented him. And though his virtues were known and appreciated among those who judged by the standard of the Church, yet it was not without some surprise and incredulity that the first news of the wonders that were taking place at Pontigny were received at Rome. The opposition there encountered is thus described by archbishop Albert. "So great was the contradiction and sinister interpretation which our pious business (of procuring the canonization) met in the court of Rome, from the senior and influential persons of the court, that all that was said or written to them concerning his miracles was received as the wildest fanaticism. I myself heard a cardinal holding the following language, 'You are losing your time and labour; we do not, to say the truth, believe your stories of miracles. In fact the age

² Malignâ interpretatione conati sunt impii obfuscare. Jul. D. vi. (2.)

³ Archiepiscopatus ære alieno ad vii. millia marcharum obligatus extitit, quem præterea totaliter in stauro destitutum reperit. B.

⁴ In divites vel histriones effundere quod acceperat pauperibus erogandum. Id.

of miracles and tongues has long passed away, and we have given up setting the sanction of the Holy See to them, and only attend now in inquisitions of canonization to the merits of the party, to such works as are to appear in the judgment at the great day. As far as my own opinion goes, were it not that the general church has received the history and legend of S. Martin, I would say that I do not believe that that Saint raised three persons from the dead. For I cannot think that our Lord Jesus Christ, who while on earth himself only restored three persons to life, would have granted so great a privilege to one of his servants.' This very cardinal, afterwards sent into France as legate of the Holy See, visited Pontigny; and being convinced of his error, made a public confession of it, prostrate on the ground at the entrance of the church, and saying, 'They who slandered thee shall draw near to thee, and shall adore the prints of thy footsteps.' And to make a fuller satisfaction, he set up three altars in the same church, consecrating them in the honour of Blessed Edmund associated with other Saints. But when all this opposition was made, partly by England, partly by the sacred college itself, our lord the pope refused to grant his approbation. And all the friends and procurators of the business were in despair. And well they might. For three or four times had the inquiry been gone through; our Saint's miracles had passed through fire and water, and not the least blemish could be thrown upon them. And yet it was still said that the process must be gone through again, that more witnesses must be produced."⁵

The result of this was that the archbishop's faithful attendant Bertrand, to whom we owe the life of the Saint

⁵ *Historia Canonizat.* M. & D. iii. 1847.

that has been so much quoted, was despatched again to England and Pontigny to obtain further proofs. The inquisition had been conducted in England by Richard bishop of Chichester, the prior of Canons Ashby, and Robert Bacon the Dominican. A new commission was now issued to the bishops of London and Lincoln. Bertrand visited Canterbury, Oxford, and Salisbury, and all the places where Edmund had lived, both in England and France, and returned laden with certificates from all those who had known him, and with evidence of fresh miracles, which silenced objection. He brought out of Burgundy several persons who had been cured, who were taken to the houses of the cardinals, and strictly examined as to the nature of the disease they had laboured under, and the medical means used. At last all doubts were removed, and all difficulties overcome. On the Sunday preceding the Christmas day 1246, the ceremony of the canonization took place in the cathedral church of Lyons. For the Papal court was for the time transferred to this city on account of the wars in Italy. Hugh, cardinal of S. Sabina, addressed the people, giving a short account of the life of S. Edmund, and recounting some of the principal miracles, which were so well established, that, by the confession of the adverse cardinals, had those of the older saints been submitted to an equally rigid scrutiny, it might be doubtful whether they would have attained to their present place in the Calendar of Saints.

On the 9th of June following (1247) took place the ceremony of the translation. It should have been deferred according to custom, till after the celebration of the feast of the Saint, November 16. But the time was anticipated to allow S. Louis, who was about to leave for the Holy Land, to be present at it. Besides the king, there were present, his mother, Blanche; his three bro-

thers, Robert, count of Artois, Alphonse, count of Poitiers, Charles, afterwards count of Provence and Anjou ; and Isabella, their sister. The presiding bishop was Peter, cardinal bishop of Alba, the bearer of the papal bull ; a host of prelates and abbots, among whom were Richard, bishop of Chichester, who had been S. Edmund's chancellor, and Albert, archbishop of Livonia, his intimate friend, were present. An immense multitude had collected from the neighbourhood to be present on the joyful occasion. A papal dispensation, expressly obtained for this solemnity, opened the precincts of the monastery to women. The church was filled, and the tomb opened in the presence of all. The body was found fresh and entire, with all the hair on the head, as when buried. It was placed by the hands of Guy, bishop of Auxerre, on the high altar, to give all an opportunity of approaching, inspecting, and touching the holy relic. There it remained till evening, when it was removed by way of precaution into the sacristy. This was Saturday, and the deposition in the new situation it was to occupy was deferred till the Sunday. Meanwhile there was no little dispute in the chapter of the abbey, as to the sort of tomb in which it should be deposited. The abbot and prior, faithful to the Cistercian simplicity so conspicuous in the architecture and appearance of their church, had prepared a plain stone coffin.⁶ But the greater part of the monks wished for something more rich and ornamental. The night passed in this strife within the walls of the convent, and it was at last determined to refer it to the bishops. But they also differed in opinion ; and as neither side could be convinced, the dispute was at last

⁶ Respondentibus quod ordo Cisterciensis in humilitate fundatus humilitatem deberet prætere. Albert. Hist. Can.

determined by the authority of the abbot, and the stone coffin was adopted.

But this did not long retain its place ; the prior was removed from his office by the visitors of the abbey, partly for the temper he had shewn in this very dispute ; and the abbot not long after resigned. Bertrand, S. Edmund's secretary, succeeded as prior, and one of his first acts was a second translation of the Saint's relics from the stone coffin to a chest, or *chasse*, richly adorned with gold and jewels. This was raised on four pillars of copper, and placed immediately behind the high altar under a canopy highly decorated. Thus it remained till 1749, when it was moved for the last time, and placed in a new *chasse*, carved in wood, in the style of the time, and supported at a considerable height by four angels also in wood.

From the time of this translation, Pontigny became the centre of pilgrimage not only to a large neighbouring district, to the provinces of Burgundy, Champagne, Lorraine, &c., but to the whole of France, and the Low Countries, and, as might be expected, England especially. It became the Tours of the east of France. It was just ten days' journey, at moderate stages,⁷ from England ; and from its position it became the first halting place at which the English pilgrim reposed on his way either to Rome or to Compostella.⁸ And it may easily be supposed that none passed it without a visit. And it was still resorted to down to the very close of the eighteenth cen-

⁷ Ab Anglia usque Pontiniacum decem moderatæ numerantur esse diætæ. Albert. Hist. Can..

⁸ Situm est in mediculio itineris per quod Romam et S. Jacobum vadunt peregrini. B. This passage has been strangely misunderstood to mean 'half-way between S. James' and Rome.' But a writer of the 13th century knew nothing of a 'court of S. James's' in London.

ture ; and though the church, like all Cistercian churches, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, it became familiarly known by the appellation of "S. Edmund's."

The devotion of the people is extinct ; pilgrims no longer haunt the shrine ; the church is empty, and the angel no more stirs the waters to heal the sick, the halt, the blind, and the maimed. But the precious treasure itself is still there. While the remains of so many of the Saints have been scattered to the winds, this by a singular Providence, has hitherto escaped.

Twice the Prince of Condé's Huguenots⁹ sacked the abbey, and burnt all that would burn in the church, but the monks had hid their prized deposit. Again, at the revolution, a furious mob entered the church, this time sure of their prey. It was there, abandoned to their will. But as they mounted the stairs that led to the shrine, a fit seized their leader, and their hands were stayed. Such at least is the tradition of the place. What is certain is, that the body still rests in its place, and that it has survived so many perils is itself a miracle. It is there—but where is the faith that gave it life and power, that evoked its divine virtue? Is it in vain to pray that God would restore that faith in the Saint's own country ; that England may not for ever thus banish her Saints ; that the time may come, however distant it may now seem, when, as Africa has reclaimed her own Augustine, England may have the right and the wish to recall her Saint, whom, in a fatal hour for herself, she drove from her bosom !

⁹ In 1568 and 1569.

NOTE.

In the *Lives of the Saints in English rhyme*, a production of the reign of Edward I, is a careful abstract of Bertrand's *Life of S. Edmund*, containing nearly every particular of that life. The following specimen may be compared with p. 31 of the preceding.

In a time at the gang dawes, this holie man also,
 Prechede a day at Oxenford, ase he ofte hadde i do :
 In Alle Halewene churchyerd ; in the northure side
 With the baneres at onderne ; as men doth alonde wel wide.
 Ase this holie man with all this folke in his prechingue was best ;
 That lodlokeste weder that mighte beo cam al fram bi west,
 Swart and deork and grisliche and overcaste al thene toun.
 The wynd bleoth also swithe grisliche ase the world scholde al a
 down.

So deork it was bicomme also that men mighte unnethe i se
 Lodlokur weder thane it was, ne mighte nevere be ;
 That folke for drede of heore clothus faste bigonne to fleo.
 Abideth, quath this holie man, ore loverd is guod and freo,
 The devel it is that bringuth this weder for to destourbi godes lore
 Ore loverd is strengore thane he ne drede ye eou nought to sore.
 He biheold upward toward God and cride him milte and ore
 That he schilde hem from the develes mighte that he ne grefde hem
 nammore,

Tho he hadde iscid is oresun that wedur bigan to glide,
 In the othur half of the Churche al in the southere side ;
 Thare it bigan to falle anon and nolde no leng abide,
 That unnethe thorough the heyge stret mighte ani man go othur ride.
 Ake in the north half of the Churche thare this holie man stod,
 Ne fel nevere a reynes drope for to desturbi a mannes mod,
 In the south half thoruy al the heige strete it leide on for wod :
 That al the stret a watere orn ase it were a gret flod,
 That folk that from the prechingue for drede of the wedere drouy,
 And that wenden bi the heige strete hadden therof inouy,
 Ake huy that bilefden thare druyge and clene were.

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